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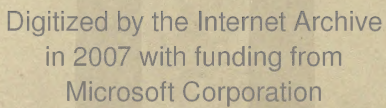
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THE ROAD IN TUSCANY

Il Penseroso.

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THE

ROAD IN TUSCANY

A COMMENTARY

BY

MAURICE HEWLETT

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY JOSEPH PENNELL

I' mi son un che, quando
Amor mi spira, noto, ed a quel modo
Che dêtta dentro, vo significando.
24 Purg. 52.

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. I

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For the chapter on Siena I have made use of an article of mine which appeared in the *Quarterly Review* for July 1903. Parts of many other chapters have been printed in the *Speaker*, and that on Volterra in the *Cornhill Magazine*. "Dante and the Traveller" contains the substance and some of the phrases of a Lecture. Where translations are not acknowledged they must be affiliated to me.

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CHAPTER I

PREAMBULATORY REMARKS

THE pretensions of this book to be a companion of Tuscan travel, and a leisurely, sententious commentary upon the country, are based upon two convictions: First, that you don't get to know a country by seeing the great towns of it; second, that, let the history, fine arts, monuments, and institutions be as fine as you please, the best product of your country will always be the people of it, who themselves produced those other pleasant spectacles. Upon these two bases I have gone to work. My commentary upon Tuscany was dictated by the logic of the roads, diverted only from its course by the accidents of travel, the humours of the moment, or by the freaks of memory and such like familiar sprites of ours. I hope that I may say I have been strict with myself. I have always preferred a road to a church, always a man to a master-

Scope of this book.

piece, a singer to his song; and I have never opened a book when I could read what I wanted on the hillside or by the river-bank.

I never heard of a guide-book to Italy devised upon such a plan. Herr Baedeker loves the train; Mr. Murray, disembodied from the fetters of time and space, seems to flit from museum to museum, no eye remarking his means of locomotion; the late Professor Ruskin seldom left the pulpit; the late Mr. Grant Allen never left the schoolroom. You must, indeed, go back to the old road-books of our grandfathers' day, which made the mile-stones their first object of interest, the turnpikes their second, the inns their third, and crowded into the last column their references to Livy, Politian, Virgil, Catullus, Dante, and Slawkenbergius, their lapidary lore, temples of Vesta, and battlefields of Hannibal; and in the notes might or might not tell you that Raphael's *Saint Cecilia* was in the gallery of Bologna, and Giulio Romano's *War of the Giants* at Mantua remarkably fine. I have abandoned the mile-stones, the turnpikes; but I have never lain at a good inn without saying so, and as for Dante and Virgil, I should like to know the man who could travel any part of Italy north of the Tiber and keep them out of the country; rather, I had better say, I should not like to know him at all.

But what of Slawkenbergius and Politian? What of battlefields and campaigns—Cæsar's, Hannibal's, Castruccio Castracane's, Grand Duke Cosimo's? What of Petrarch and the Renaissance of elegant literature? What of Giotto's Tower and the Cathedral of Siena, of the Correggiosity of Correggio, and of all the Botticellis which that master did not paint?[1] Here are questions which it does not become me to leave unanswered; for it must not hastily be assumed that a road is of necessity more interesting than a battlefield, or a man than a poem, or the parson than his church. Let me take these in order: History, Literature, Fine Art—are not these things in themselves worth studying in Tuscany?

History of Tuscany, and histories of it.

As to History, one would think so indeed. There are more histories of Florence than there are of Russia, and some of them very admirable, and all very long. I suppose there is no great nation in Europe with a finer set of chronicles of its own. Those of the Villani dynasty alone would have made of English history a different thing. From the unknown chronicler of the *Dugento* onwards

[1] I hope it will be observed that I know the trend of modern art-criticism, which does not concern itself with the questions, Did A paint such-and-such, and was it worth painting? but rather with this, Who among all known or unknown painters may have painted such-and-such, hitherto universally attributed to A?

to Grand-Ducal Galluzzi there cannot be a year for which there is no account from an eye-witness, nay, from an actor in the deeds done. Add to these the diarists, the letter-writers; remember Sacchetti the novelist; crown all with Dante himself. Observe what a field for your Tiraboschis and Muratoris, your brochurists, your *memoires-pour-servir*-men, your Graingers, who, taking a vapid novel like *Marietta de' Ricci*, annotate it into a Dictionary of National Biography! But this is not all. Turn over the spade-and-rudder work of the *Osservatore Fiorentino*, the learned *excursus* of the R. P. Rica, S.J.; take some account of the academic exercises of Poggio, Filelfo, and Machiavelli, all three masters of the art of writing history and leaving out nearly all the facts; ponder Guicciardini and his fellows;—digest all this if you are able, and then cease to wonder that Captain Napier, Mr. Trollope, Monsieur Perrens, and two hundred other gentlemen, have felt themselves justified in co-ordinating as much of the stuff as they could handle, and in calling the outcome a History of the Florentine Republic, or of the Grand Duchy of Tuscany.

Leaving aside what I might urge as to the unwisdom of adding to labours so many and so various, I shall take leave to say that a history of Florence or of Tuscany is but a history by suffer-

ance. There can be no history (in the great sense) of anything but a nation in relation to nations. Florence was too small a nation to establish any such relationships; and Tuscany was never a nation at all. To decide whether

THE ARNO FROM THE PONTE VECCHIO, FLORENCE.

or not the old Etruscan hegemony of cities formed a nation of Etruria is not so easy as it sounds, and is not important to you at this moment, seeing that the confines of the Etruscan races went as far as Rome on the south and Bologna on the north, nearly half as much ground again as I shall ask you to traverse. The only

so-called "country" I can talk about is the Tuscany of the Countess Maud's time, of Dante's, of the Medici's times; and of that Tuscany I say that it is a geographical expression, useful to cover all the nations who have seethed and settled between the Apennines and the Tiber. There were scores and fifties of these, many more than Sismondi took account of; indeed, I shall have to say more than once or twice in the course of this work, that every little white-washed village on every little olive-blurred hill was at one time or another, in all essential respects, a "nation" sufficient unto itself. Whether there had been in the dim backward of time a kinship, a community, a tie between the men of Volterra and the men of Grosseto, or between the men of little Pistoja and the men of little Certaldo—to collocate names at random—one neither knows nor need care. The facts are that during all the time of the written word these various folk, if not at civil war within their own walls, or at war with their neighbours, were suffering the inevitable upshot of such a state and getting enslaved by some rival or another. A Tuscan hegemony was never nearer the fact than when there was a Guelfic League; a Tuscan Empire lived only in the dreams of Dante and Castruccio; a Tuscan Republic was flicked out like a soap-bubble when

Burlamacchi, poor frothy creature, lost his head. That which did ensue, an enslaving, to wit, of nearly every Tuscan nation by the Florentine, never made a nation of Tuscany. The people had one master, but that master had not one people. The federation was too late. The Pisan remained of Pisa,[1] the Aretine of Arezzo, each hating, fearing, scorning the Florentine[2]—who, for his part, cordially returned the whole of the compliment. Two things flow from that: the first, that to talk of a history of Tuscany is to talk nonsense; the second, that local character, local idiosyncrasy, local manifestation are the points of supreme interest for the intelligent traveller.

To say this is also to say that if any one of these towns has no history (in the world-sense), it has a biography, which is a sum of all the biographies of all its unknown citizens—the men who sat at its councils, ruled its markets, built its churches, painted its walls, and wrote its little books and sonnets; yes, and sang under its daughters' windows o' nights, and hoed its vines, and pruned its olives, and urged its great pale oxen along its furrows. This is the real history of Poggibonsi, and Barga, and Sinalunga, which I have tried to get at; I am entitled to say that the desire for

[1] And does to this day; and so do all the others.

[2] See Appendix I. to this chapter—History of Florence.

this has never left me in my journeyings by the Tuscan roads; and that in framing my commentary upon them, whensoever I have come across history, or poem, or deed, or painting which has in any sense illustrated this, it is here—or the mischief is in it. For once more I say, this is worth doing; and once more, if all the things we call Tuscan art are good, then the Tuscans who made them should be better. And the fact is, they *are* better, much better; and I propose to prove it in two volumes octavo, illustrated by my friend Mr. Pennell.

Literature.

If I treat history in this cavalier fashion, making it a mere quarry for my building, what of Literature? How are we to handle Dante, Petrarch, Boccaccio; Politian, the Pulci, Lorenzo; Machiavelli, Guicciardini, Michael Angelo, or any other triad you like to object against me in these pages? Much in the same fashion, I fancy, taking what we can get out of them to illuminate our Tuscans and Tuscany, in the sure and certain hope that what in them exhibits the Tuscan nations will also exhibit themselves. I don't pretend, even in a preface, to say that I think any of these gentry of much account as poets—except Dante.[1] I think they were victims of the common Italian complaint—

[1] Except, also, Machiavelli—a manifest immortal.

which decimated Tuscany, while it was epidemic

A COVERED STREET, FLORENCE.

all over the peninsula—which you may call artists' itch—the disease of longing to say some-

thing without having anything in particular to say. But it was difficult even for Petrarch to be simply wordy; therefore Petrarch, so far as he has content, shall be useful on the road. The time is not now for estimating Tuscan literature. The glamour is still upon us. Petrarch is one of our household gods; and the very measure of the reprobation we have for Boccaccio is the measure of the level on which we put him. Possibly if we did not think him the greatest of the pornographers we should think him less of a story-teller. I shall have occasion to class him below Sacchetti in the latter degree.

But if the Tuscan poets (Dante apart) and novelists (Sacchetti apart) are not greatly forward in this book the fault is not mine. They are an indoor company, their books are library affairs; they have little to say of Tuscany, and not much that is illuminative of the Tuscans. Victims, one and all of them, of the great theory, that the World is a Garden, they are properly to be treated of in the chapter which I devote to it. Otherwise they tell us little, and all the use they are is to help us estimate the mischief they wrought among the Tuscan nations; for a mischief it was to have obscured the greatness of Dante for near six hundred years, and a gross mischief to have convinced respectable persons—

Donna Berta and Ser Martino included—that the rough, dusty, sweating, windy world was a combed and windless garden made for our delight. Let me not be understood to say that the Tuscan chamber-minstrels and jongleurs are unworthy your study and mine. Far from that; there is no school where I can learn more, and no better company for me in the world—within doors. Read Petrarch in your mistress's bower and Boccaccio in bed; admire the airy flight of Pulci's butterfly-wings; keep Machiavelli for the study, and Lorenzo and Politian for the summer-house; but don't encumber your carriage with any one of them. Leave their room for Repetti, who will want all of it. That rascal has seven volumes to his credit. And, I must be pardoned for adding, never, never leave Dante behind you wheresoever you adventure in Tuscany; and if you forget your Sacchetti and are sorry for it, blame not me. He is the greatest of the novelists.

Art.

The railways, the love of towns, and the worship of Art have worked together in a vicious circle which has become like a whip-cord round the neck of the intelligent traveller. It matters little with which you begin, the others are in a concatenation. Take the last first. Italian art in all its manifestations has been

isolated and magnified until we have lost sight of the fact to which I made bold to call attention just now—that if the product is interesting the producer must have been, at least, equally interesting. Well, pictures and sculptures have been herded into town museums; the railways have borne us from town to town—not that we may pretend to visit a country, but rather that we may walk through museums. Or take the love of town-life as your point of departure. Can you blame the Syndic or his advisers for robbing the country churches of their pictures, or the railways for running expresses which only stop once between Bologna and Florence, or Florence and Rome? I shall have much to say of the towns as I go along: one cannot ignore them; one would be a fool if one did. But I hope that I have always kept in view this fact, that the towns are fed upon country blood, and are therefore useful; but that they corrupt it in the process of assimilation, and therefore hardly ever show you the true people of the nation, any more than they can (nowadays) exhibit to you the true people of the town—the true burghers, in fact—men like John Arnolfini of Lucca, as we have him in our National Gallery, or Giovanni Bicci de' Medici, as you can see him in the Uffizii—the men who made it what it is; built the churches, painted

the frescoes, fought on the walls, or enriched

NEAR THE PONTE VECCHIO.

themselves by usury. But I am wandering away from Art.

I can't afford to be delicate in my usage of works of Fine Art; nor will the traveller of the true sort—the adventurer, I like to call him—be tempted to stand on any more ceremony than I have been. Be he in church or gallery, in villa or Campo Santo, next to the rational enjoyment which he will never fail to get out of beautiful or curious things, and all the chords of memory or feeling which they pluck at, he is most likely to use the masterpieces he sees as so many short cuts to the minds or hearts of the men who made them, and of those for whom they were made. Let him once realise that Donna Berta and Ser Martino[1] were, as likely as not, the painters or the patrons of these things, and he will have no hesitation. He will read pictures as if they were guide-books:—as indeed they are in Italy, and second to none. Æsthetic, archæology, ecclesiology, hagiology will mean nothing to my man, who, if he is offered a work of (say) Duccio of Siena as an intellectual puzzle of the first order, will no doubt reply, "The question whether this or that bad picture is by Duccio or Cimabue is nothing to me. Sufficient is it that somebody painted the thing, and to somebody's order. Now, how near does it take me to those dead people in whose country I stand?" Nor will he

[1] See Appendix II. to this chapter—Donna Berta and Ser Martino.

be tempted to soar with long-pinioned Mr. Ruskin in warm, ethical waves of air. He will not unduly tingle with the thought that Botticelli could paint roses, nor be crudely depressed to remember that Cuyp preferred cowskin or Ghirlandajo napery. Why on earth should they not? Every field of Art is a welcome field when once you can see the people who till it, and those who go a-reaping there. Lastly, let *technique* and all such frippery be far from him. These things conceal exactly what he wishes to discover; they are trade secrets which amuse and instruct the trade. Let cooks take delight in the mixing of the dishes, but let gentlemen eat of them.

No; let my adventurer be happy in Tuscany, and learn to look upon cities, great buildings, pompous monuments, gilded altar-pieces, carved Madonnas, as so much harvest for his eye, neither the best nor the worst. The best is a wise man or a pretty woman, the worst a railway or a bore. There is plenty room between these extremes for altar-pieces. If he must have a curious inquiry beyond the picturesque, the romantic, or the happy accident, it shall not be (if I can help him) among dead dogs, but rather among live men and beating hearts. The hearts of the men of the Tuscan nation are worth finding out.

Considering now the matter more nicely,—the

sights, sounds, smells, methods, manners, and ways of doing, — let the modern adventurer consider that he is going to a country where the best is dead or dying, and play the reactionary as far as he can. If he is minded to get close to old Tuscany, to converse at first hand with the Tuscans, and to consider the noble side by side with the base, I can promise him he will do better on the highway than the railway. This, with its intolerable apparatus of iron, smoke, and noise, and the venal cosmopolitans who are paid to do its service and do it not unless you pay them more, has driven a broad furrow across and across the land; and wherever it has stayed there has leaked out of it over the town or village some poisonous breath, as it were, to kill every natural thing. Uniformity is the staple of its beastly food; it goes by clockwork and expects you to live by it. Here is why every railway station and railway suburb is like every other. There is nothing to be learned from such travel but how to keep your temper, or (rather) when to lose it.[1]

Invective against the railway.

You cannot learn the ways of a country except by keeping to its ways; nor was a more disastrous

[1] It is worthy of remark, also, that the moment travelling by road ceased, the writing of good travel books ceased also. I believe Mr. Howells wrote the last of them.

fallacy ever contrived by man, than that which bade him suppose that by going to a foreign town you were travelling in a foreign country. Why, just consider that in Florence, for instance, you never need speak or hear any language but your own. Indeed, I suppose a British dowager could travel from Chiasso to Syracuse and never be at the want of a cup of tea at five o'clock! All this, of course, is a melancholy travesty of travel. Speaking lightly, if it were not for the glory of the thing, a panorama, faintly smelling of coffee, oranges, and cigars (with a whiff of garlic "to animate the whole") would do as well. I don't want to pitch my pipe too high, or I would counsel every man to go afoot—which was Jean-Jacques Rousseau's way, or on horseback, which was Montaigne's. This is how Don Quixote also travelled; it is the real thing, other ways are makeshifts. However, let me avoid extremes, and my client take a carriage. So Goethe, Mr. Young, Signor Casanova, Monsieur Bourget, Mr. Rogers, and other honourable men saw Italy. And they were very wise.

The country way.

On the road you are slowly[1] prepared for the succession of wonders that awaits you; by the

[1] Six miles an hour, all over, is good for a Tuscan pair of horses; thirty miles a day as much as they care about. I have done fifty at a push.

lessons of the road you learn that a country is a harmony, and not an expression of political geography. You pick your way among unknown peoples by their hedgerows, their church steeples, the tools by which they raise their bread, by the flowers that grow in their fields, and the flowers that are their faces. You make romance, you read it as you pass, you are it; for to these moving flowers and weeds of a distant soil, these magnificently posed youths and maids (with their tragic eyes), these infinitely venerable old men and infinitely wise old women, you yourself are the transient wonder—as portentous as a meteor—and as such you must prepare to be received. There is no avoiding this. Nearly all the men will salute you as you pass—"*Felice sera,*" charming, kindly phrase!—and many of the women; they will gather about your inn-door, prepared for any astonishment, pester your driver with questions—and you shall hear him answer!—admire your horses, gape to hear of London, Paris, or Milan the rich city. Should you suffer it—and why not?—many an animated debate will be held in the kitchen that night, and your name, person, rank, and fortune be so many shuttlecocks to be beaten to and fro by the most agile, curious, witty and dramatic folk in Europe. You might suppose that, your-

Praise of the road.

self being a spectacle, it would be difficult to catch your spectators unawares, that while they were gaping at you, you would be estopped from gaping at them. It is not really difficult where the auditorium is so many and the actor but one—and he unwillingly a player. I don't know whether Mr. Tree, that leisurely performer, has time to study the humours of his assistance; but if he have, I'll be bound he is amused. I do think that, rightly reading as you go, and wheresoever you go, and howsoever (except in a train), with your instincts quick, your fancy alight, and all your sympathies generously warm—you will learn at every turn of your wheels. Anyhow, I can only speak of what I know. I know there is no other way to learn a country.[1]

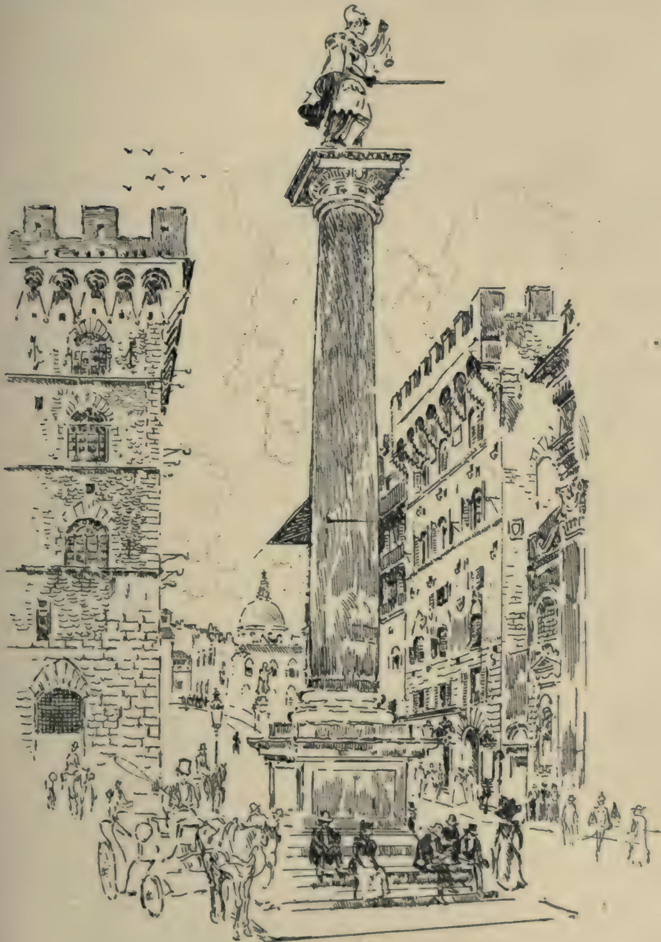
This being made plain, let every man approach Tuscany as he will or as he can. The realm of France is a great realm; rather, it is half a dozen. That is a very good way which takes you by Beauvais through Burgundy into Savoy, and thence into Piedmont. The other, which keeps west of Paris and goes by Chartres, Nevers, and Le Puy, takes you from Avignon by Aix-en-Provence to the Corniche. By either you will learn, better perhaps than by the Swiss roads (whereon the

Choice of a road of approach.

[1] There is the sea-way, no doubt; but that is not for queasy stomachs.

transition into Italy is too gradual for my taste), how irrepressible is innate art. Chambéry is pure French; St. Jean-de-Maurienne is transition. Modane, the grey frontier town, pinched and withered by the mountain air, may be French politically, but its church tells the truth. That has a Lombard belfry—a square shaft, a conical peak flanked by four smaller, the long plain barrel and bald façade which you will find from here to Vicenza, and as far south as Sassolo. Here is the first indication you receive, for the people tell you nothing. They are of a breed peculiar to the Alps, neither of Savoy nor of Piedmont. And then, as you get down the terrific Mont Cenis to Sant' Ambrogio, to Susa, to Turin and the plain, and long before you reach the Po, every dimple and fold of this grey, sunny country full of light, these deep-eaved naked houses, made for a people that lives all in the open, and does but go home to go to bed; these gaunt, weathered churches (with their evidence of a religion grown stale, but grown also a part of nature)—so empty and so big, worn by dust, and sun, and torrential rains;—all these things tell you that you have left fair France, whether the towns be called Exilles or Oulx, or the snow-spikes Roche-Michel or Pic de Rochebrune. You learn too — nor will a full experience of

Italy materially stir your opinion—that this is



VIA TORNABUONI, FLORENCE.

not a green country. Greenness is of the north and west, where the sun, its hearty enemy, is

tempered. Italy is a grey country, flushed with green in the spring, dusty grey all the summer (under a pearl-grey sky), grey bleached to white after the winter floods; grey earth, grey tree-stems, grey olives, grey grass, and a blue heaven over a grey-green river swirling through pale sands. This is the colour of Tuscany, and of much of the Lombard plain, which certain painters of old have caught and translated: Giotto bluntly after his manner, Piero della Francesca patiently after his; a poetical, wizardish Alessio Baldovinetti also, once; the others (incurably hunting their fairy tales and indoor-pieces) never. I don't know whether these sort of things—examples merely—are worth a carriage and a couple of horses. To me, travelling, they are everything in life; and very nearly the only use of painters' work is to enable me to relate and connote them. They are as devoutly to be sought by the lover of the land as the play of light and colour upon his mistress's cheek, or the turn of her head when she is put out. They are not to be seen from the windows of a railway carriage, through the mounting and falling telegraph wires.

From Bologna, the learned city, dignified by Della Quercia beyond its deserts, but proved pure in heart by Francia[1]—that city where

[1] If you doubt this allusive remark, the next time you are in Bologna,

Monsieur de Stendhal talked scandal with princesses all night, and Napoleoniana with *abbés* all day—from Bologna, I say, you cross the Reno by an ancient bridge, a river whose issue from the rocks on a northerly course will be your first indication of Tuscany. Hence you must drive the last stretches of the immense plain, and slowly see the country receive hints of the south. The familiar sights will still be there: the vine everywhere, still the Lombard poplar, acacias, hacked mulberry. After Bologna, going south, the cypresses begin to recall the First Eclogue, solemn files of them, beckoning like digits your way to church or burial-place in holy acre; but more slowly the mulberry gives way to the olive. That is a tree which asks for two things Emilia cannot give—hill-slopes and a southern face to the sun. You must not look for them much before Pracchia; but the cypresses should be welcome enough. Monte della Guardia, a pyramidal hill with a great domed church like a crown in the sky, has a grove of them. This is the landmark for Bologna; you see

Graduale.

look at the sculptures round the porch of San Petronio, and Francia's Marriage and Death of Saint Cecilia—and then say if there is anything else in Bologna to compare with the first, or no chance for a people any one of whom could see women like Francia's being married or buried. That such women still live in Bologna these eyes can testify, but as yet their Francia awaits reincarnation.

it until you are deep in the folds of the mountains. There the sweeping curves of the fine road you must travel bury you in rocks, wood, and water; you have no thought but of the penury of man and his abject little circumstance. Given you are impressionable, open to the pathetic fallacy, not ten of your forty miles in solitary places will have been told before you feel the heart of a lost child panic-blown in your body, and all your being wailful for a sight of the lowlands.

This is how mountains affect a man of less kindred with the infinite than Shelley. Man that is born of woman is born also of a house and a bed. A church is his familiar room. There he receives the chrism and salt, there he receives the sacrament. Out of a house, into a church, back to a house he takes his wife; from a house to a church he or she is taken and the other left. So the days go round. Set him under the frowning side of a mountain, in sight of frozen peaks, while he is swept by a ground wind, or to see all their banners a-flacking in a gale while he strives in dead air — he cannot find his gods, and is appalled to find himself of no account at all. How he desires and looks all ways for a hint of home. If some poor hind, needing the same

Mountains.

assurance, has set a cross in his tilth to scare away devils from his beans, or daubed Madonna on a wall and served her with nosegays from the meadows, the pale traveller warms and is comforted. Brother man has been here; God is not far off then. Courage, my good friend, skirt one more misty gorge, toil about the base of Monte Cimone: this good road on which you are was built by a Grand Duke Leopold, a man even as you, with all your present need of God. Spy about you for the ragged head of Monte Calvi, which hides up Pracchia; once there, you will have done your five-and-forty miles from Bologna; take to the inn, though it be bad, for the mountain is worse. And next morning get up before the sun strikes your chill resting-place, and go to that point under the viaduct where Ombrone makes a leap to the south. See far below you the velvet plain, the roads like twisted ribbons, the soft bosses of the trees; and Pistoja in pride, like a dark carpet, flecked here and there with white where the sun gleams on a house's cheek. Men and their busy haunts for a man!—and architecture, which makes the only mountains worthy of a man's care; for they are hollow, and one can hide there from the wind and bitter stars.

You descend through chestnut woods to the

olives, the festooned vines, all that wonderful, pitiful husbandry of Tuscany, where every foot of land is filled with food, and every man who works it goes hungry. You pass through village after village —Piteccio, San Felice, Candoglia; you reach Pistoja, a little Florence, towered and crowned; you see a great yellow villa with a park and woods, ilex, churches more than enough, with flat-cornered belfries pierced through the uppermost story; you find also factories, and dwellings for their hands, new-built, flimsy houses in raw patches of ground which were once pastures of this garden-valley. Everything that is beautiful will seem old, and everything new as if made of cardboard. The signs are many that this was once a wealthy kingdom, which could afford to squander its money upon pompous shrines, lay out palaces, gardens, cities on great designs; build solidly, afford to follow the natural bent of its people; and build slowly, being as secure of time as of pence. And that is very truth. Alas and alas! *Etruria fuit* must be said or sung over every stretch of this lovely, wasting land. The people live — Fiorentini, Sanesi, Pisani, Lucchesi—every nation of them as distinct as on the day when their own painters set them on their own church walls: the Tuscans live, but

Tuscany and the Tuscans.

the land is dead. Transformed, they live. At any hour of the day you may see Giovanna degli Albizzi walk in the streets of Florence, or Ilaria

OLD FLORENCE.

Guinigi go like a goddess down the narrow ways of Lucca. Pia de' Tolomei is not dead; she is still recessed in Siena. But Siena herself, "fair, soft Siena"; but Lucca, Florence, and the rest of the Twelve? Dead, frozen, cold as the saints

in their feretories; to be worshipped, but not loved—to be seen, but not known again. This is a note of strange and haunting beauty through all the land, which nobody can miss, on which one must harp for the edification of all adventurers who come from the north into Tuscany, their heads full of snatches of history, snatches of art, and their own heart-strings taut to begin the song of Tuscany. They shall make the Approaches then with some reverence, since reverence is proper to the neighbourhood of the dead.

The double face.

There is one last preparation to make before we cross the Magra. I mean, to allow for that double face this land will present to all who accost it fairly. You may say that the traveller is like Ulysses in his galley among the rocks. A siren will pipe to him from either hand; one ear or the other he will feel bound to stop with wax. To be plain, two opposing qualities will absorb, perplex, enchant, and confound him—the fine and the base, the noble and the mean, the infinitely great and the infinitely little. Say, an overweening church of golden marble is in view. Enchanting, grandiose, audacious beyond belief. Go near: it is banked in ordure, crusted with dirt, defiled by every act of man; yet appears the more beautiful for

its cloak of tatters and filth. Or behold a man shaped like a god, who (as he leans on his spade to observe you) takes the attitude—compact of mystery and power—of the Olympian Hermes, yet who lives with swine and copies their customs. Or find a corniced palace at the angle of a mean lane, with manure heaped in its *cortile*, and slops hanging to dry out of the pedimented windows of the *piano nobile*; and satisfy yourself that the nasty rags, all a-flutter in the wind, look like banners, and that the grave-eyed, watchful, imperturbable people who gaze at you from behind half-opened shutters might be princes of old Florence, or ladies such as those who walk through Ghirlandajo's frescoes. The Prodigal Son could sink no lower than these thrifty poor hinds; sloth could never breed a decay more miserable than that of these peasants who work all day; and how under heaven can a race so shameless as it seems, so lost to reticence, so naked and so unabashed, remain the most modest, the best mannered to be found in Europe? You are torn two ways—towards the noble, towards the vile. For while you are gazing in wonder at some white façade glistening in the sun, trying to conceive of the art which filled every facet of it with jewelled ornament, with the same motion you are craning your ears

towards the old hag mumbling enchantments by the door, or are painfully intent on the Donatellesque *putti* tumbling in the dust below the steps. Once upon a time your inn will have been a palace; in your bedroom, as likely as not, there will be half the carved front of a fireplace. Lean out of window, you may touch with your hand the smooth-worn Piccolomini crescents, or the negro-head of the dead and gone Pucci. In that very act your eye will be caught by the wonderful landscape of roof and gable, well-head and casement, and drain-pipes like the trunks of creeping trees on all sides of the view. The colour of all this—yellow, purple, and grey, old red, faint rose, blue-green; its profusion, so needless yet so splendid;[1] its character, its kinship to the hills and the rocks; its beauty, disgustfulness, calm strength, patience, and humility—all this, I say, will catch your breath at first gaze. And while you look, an ostler will lead an old horse out of a dark entry, and talk to it with the coaxing vocables a mother uses to her child; and a girl will put a cushion on the window-sill, lean her bare arms there, and cry strangely intimate matter to another across two streets, singing the pretty names of things not pretty, caressing her friend from afar. Also

[1] And so extraordinarily like nature.

the chambermaid, probably toothless and certainly in slippers, will come out on to a foliated balcony and empty slops out of the window next your own, seeing no harm and meaning none—what time a heavy bell, hidden but very close, will toss and wrangle the *Ave Maria*, or First Hour of the Night. And all this, and exactly this, will have been seen, heard, and done by the dead Ruccellai, Tarlati, or Della Pecora, now dusty under his marble tomb in the church of Francis or Frediano. Thus History calls you, and present Life; thus Beauty absorbs you, and thus the Squalid; thus the shamelessness frets you with wonder, and thus again that continence which stops dead at a point. Really, however, you may resolve these complexities. The Past lives in the Present, this people has never changed. The fine and the base have the same root. For the Tuscans are unashamed because they are simple, and are modest for the same reason.

This is the secret of the contending charms which lure the adventurer now this way and now that in Tuscany. The careless profusion which made the front of the church of Siena a maze of ornament, in which prophets, sibyls, hippogriffs, wolves, elephants, dragons, and virgin martyrs struggle towards the west like tossing sprays of foliage, is born of the

The secret.

same squandering spirit which gave every inn an acreage of roof more than double its own. The mental sloth which made the Tuscans contented under Governments the most corrupt in history, keeps them so under one for which ineptitude would be a flattering apposite. When Beccadelli dedicated to the Pope the most obscene book perhaps ever devised by a Christian, he did no worse than his descendants of to-day, who will talk or write of any function of the body—and yet keep the commandments as well as you or I. One may not be far wrong in reducing the three of these compound qualities to one common term, or in naming this Simplicity—a limpid sincerity like that of children, who act as they feel, and speak of what they dream, and yet keep a dignity of their own, and know the reserve which Nature puts upon every wholesome creature of hers. That is how I explain, and very much why I love the Tuscan races of the hills and the valleys—the most alert, charming, intelligent, curious people in Europe.

But the horses are at the door; the luggage is strapped up behind. Let us take to the road.

APPENDIX I

HISTORY OF FLORENCE

WITH this one difference—a good one, to be sure—that the rulers of Florence enslaved the other cities of Tuscany one by one, the history of that place is almost precisely that of any one of her neighbours. For Florence was enslaved before she could make slaves, and those others were enslaved before slaves of Florence they could become. Guelf or Ghibelline—skirts of the Emperor or skirts of the Pope by which to cower; robber-count or robber-bishop for tyrant: here was the beginning. The trades waxed impudent, drove out the count, or flouted the bishop: "We will get protection from higher places; go to! let us seek the Emperor's vicar, or Christ's." Guelf or Ghibelline—herein we have the next stage. The next is civil war, or war with your neighbours. Guelf or Ghibelline—the Tuscans choose sides, and in the very act shatter themselves; for within our very walls are partisans of one or other. You shall not say that Florence is for the Pope, or Siena for the Emperor, until the Pope's Florentines have hounded out the Emperor's Florentines, and Siena has done the like by her own. Then there are Florentine exiles in Siena, and Sienese in Florence; but they keep their nationality still—so that huge Ghibelline Farinata of Florence made discord at the Council of Empoli when his party proposed to pull stone from stone in the city which had bred and then spewed him out; and the Ghibellines found that it was one thing to sting the Pope's flank, and another to get profit out of a neighbour's ruin. But it must never be forgotten, in prying into this sorry business, that the party cries of *Chiesa!* or *Cesare!* meant more often than not trade and monopoly for the criers thereof.

After discord at large came discord in particular: Guelfic Florence was rent again by the Black and White stripes. In

this ruin Dante fell; for this quarrel Corso Donati shed his life; out of it, to crawl and fasten upon the spent carcase, the Medici came to their own. Of this race you can discern two figures large enough for history—Lorenzo, a crafty tyrant, and Cosimo, a blunt one. Cosimo Primo, indeed, I reckon to be a great figure. He made the Grand Duchy; he handled European tools. He used the Emperor Charles for his purposes—without him he could hardly have got Siena; and when he had done with him, threw him off, and sat still, as if saying: "There then, Sire, you are out and I am in. What will you make of me?" It is more than reasonable to suppose that had Cosimo had sons of his own force, there might have been a kingdom of Italy in the sixteenth century. But he had not. Francis was a moody fool, and Ferdinand a dull man. With the Austrian marriage begins the downfall of the Medici power. The thing was crumbling when Cosimo gave it over; it fell to powder when the blood was mixed, and frittered out with Cosimo III. and Giovanni Gastone, the first a Jesuit, the second a dreary frip. Europe, which had never touched Italy for long together since the Roman Cæsars had made Europe a possibility—Europe stepped in. Lorraine ruled Tuscany, Spain had Lombardy; and the rest, until Buonaparte ruled all, was silence, faintly disturbed by evening parties.

APPENDIX II

DONNA BERTA AND SER MARTINO

THESE are, of course, Dante's typical Florentine couple: his Darby and Joan, as we say. If I am right, and there is no history of Tuscany in the flag-and-trumpet sense worth speaking about, but (on the other hand) a collection to be made of invaluable biography,—if I am right, why, then, it is

the biographies of Donna Berta and Ser Martino we must get at. Could we, for instance, not happen upon some man who might stand up once and for all as a Florentine, Lucchese, Aretine, Volterran, track him from bed to board; in the piazza, in the back-shop, riding afield to count his wethers, steering his galley into foreign ports, wedding some mild-faced lass, and begetting some score of sharp-eyed children; dying at last, fortified by sacraments, and lying with

CELLINI'S SHOP, PONTE VECCHIO.

placid, folded hands under some basso-rilievo in Santa Croce? A dozen of these, each standing for his age, and the thing is done! Donna Berta and Ser Martino are the people you need. Well, I have done my best. Biographies are to be had of persons notable, not so much for what they did, as for what they signified. Buondelmonte, for instance, did very little but get his throat cut in a picturesque, romantic manner. Very true, but he can stand—none better—for that Berserk time when the length of a man's sword was the length of his property, and no one could tell from hour to

hour whether his fire would burn upon his hearth, or his house be burned about his ears. No doubt I might add a score, all equally significant. Prince Giovanni Pico, what would he signify? Well, I think he would stand for the age of faërie, the beautiful, solemn, futile, serious, ridiculous young man. That was the age when sonnets were sufficient reward of lovers, and Della Robbia ware could express the Christian verities; when Savonarola said, "Burn the vanities!" and the Florentines burnt *him;* when Ficino sacrificed to Plato, and Poliziano wrote letters like Cicero, and odes like Horace, and erotics like Anacreon, and pastorals like Theocritus. It was the last age when Florentines believed in their own dreams—and had them; it was the fifteenth century. There were the Spaniards to come after that, and the Grand Dukes, Alessandro the black satyr, and Cosimo with his iron club, and the Jesuits, and the *cicisbei*, and the Academy—the lies, the lusts, the blood on the mouth, and the ashes in it; and who so fit to figure it all as Bianca Capello, that "daughter of Venice"? If I had to select one more it would be Giovanni Gastone, the last of the Medici, with his full-moon, chalk face, his wig and his fat-blinded eyes, who had his portrait on the coinage circumscribed, "Imago Dei eminens supra Tuscos." And the thing was true: to this the Florentines had come—that they adored a wig on a wig-block. The pen falters, refuses its office. I do not offer you here any portrait of this Tuscan god. Mr. Pennell, bolder than I, has enjoyed him. With his eclipse Florence fell drowsy, and has drowsed ever since. The wild ass may stamp o'er her head—and does—but will not break her sleep.

Underlying all this welter of futility, unworthy and unsuccessful striving, waste of blood and debauch of honour, Donna Berta and Ser Martino went their thrifty, industrious way, and may be seen at it in peeps afforded by century after century. Dante is full of their probity and frugal cheer—

Bellincion Berti was of that family, and so was Cacciaguida. Sacchetti shows them to you—ridiculously enough—fishing for pigs in the well, and in other no less absurd cases; but they cease not to be admirable. Cosimo Vecchio, Cosimo P. P., was one of them, a shrewd, frosty old burgess, whose politics were an extension of business; Pandolfini or Alberti,

A COPPERSMITH, FLORENCE.

whichever wrote the remarkable treatise, *Del Governo della Famiglia* was in the direct line. Thrift, thrift, thrift! is all his cry. The Piovano Arlotto was a facetious member of the family. And so we go on, tracing the fine couple down and down the ages, until, in this very day, I could take you directly to some twenty dozen brace of them who have never stirred out of their *sestiere*, never missed an evening at the *caffè* since

they were married, nor a mass at the Annunziata or Trinità during the same time. Whose biographies are not to be written, nor their minds ever disclosed; for there are no materials for the first and of the second they have hidden the key. Yet they were the staple of Florence, and in them is all the worth of the place and all the hope it has. From them came the wool-carding and cloth-traffic; they struck the florins of thin fine gold; they lent the money for all the great enterprises, and they took the interest and lent that. Much more than that, from them came the brains and craft which have made the name of Florentine one to conjure with. Boccaccio and Sacchetti were little priests; Giotto was a goatherd; Benozzo, Ghirlandajo, Luca della Robbia, Mino, Desiderio, Rossellino, Pollajuolo—of what kindred were these but of Donna Berta's and Ser Martino's? They kept shops and worked in them the livelong day; they spun their wares out of their heads and bargained for them. A patron comes in to command a picture: hear them chaffer it out. Madonna with the Bimbo on her knees—so much; blue cloak, crimson robe—so much; Sant' Antonino on one side, San Giovanni on t'other, *angiolino* with a lute on the steps of the throne—so much; *grandezza*, so many *bracchie*; *fondo d' oro*—so much. Predella—ah, he wishes a predella? *Dunque*, Resurrection in the middle—announcing angel on the left hand, receiving Madonna on the right hand—or shepherds to left, Magi to right—little figures, figurini—at so much per inch. It was an affair of the yard measure and the scales, you perceive—and why, in Heaven's name, should it not be? What man of genius was ever the worse for being honest? How many have tried it since their day? Did our deer-stealing Shakespeare? Did our beery Ben? Did the great Samuel Johnson himself, with his "poverty, total idleness, and the pride of literature"? But had Sir Walter the less honour because he lived like a gentleman and paid his way by trading his brains? I trow not. Genius in a dressing-gown living on credit was not the Florentine way—

at any rate until Benvenuto Cellini's time; and then, genius being worn something thin, had to give itself the greater airs; just as Casanova, admitting he was not a gentleman, rounded upon you by saying, the greater the necessity to give himself the carriage of one. So he travelled in a coach and six, and swindled a silly old woman to pay for it.

No; it was the magnificoes who blew trumpets and levied wars, but Donna Berta and Ser Martino made Florence, made all Tuscany. All honour to the pair! These pages shall try to do them justice.

THE SHRINE IN BORGO S. JACOPO.

CHAPTER II

DANTE AND THE TRAVELLER: NOT TO BE OMITTED BY THE JUDICIOUS

If you remember what couple of books were in Shelley's jacket pockets when they found him strewn like a weed on the sands at Lerici, I need not be at the labour of enumerating them; though, in fact, they were a Keats and a Sophocles. No bad library for a man at any time but when he is in the act to swim for his life.[1] Yet my ideal traveller in Tuscany, my Adventurer, to whom I address this book, will give up one or the other in order that he may have the *Divine Comedy* permanently in one of his pockets. Having it there he may be sure of being accompanied in his wanderings by the very genius of the place. There are many reasons why this should be so, and still more why it *is* so. I shall not deal with

[1] Shelley could not swim.

many of them, but such as I do deal with shall be sledge-hammer reasons.[1]

If you desire a test of a man's fitness to conduct you about his own country, I advise you to examine his behaviour towards the rivers and hills of it. If he steers by them, you may trust him. If you find that they are his intimates — living creatures, persons, characters to him—you will do well to make much of him: he is a picked man. It is well known that certain countries there are where all men steer themselves by rivers, and that England is not one, at all events not south of the Tyne. In Northumberland it is still common—possibly also in Cumberland—but in the shires it is a choice between a public-house and a turnpike, and in the south it is the London Road. In Scotland rivers are always landmarks; and there you find people talking of them as if they were persons. I mean that they don't use the formality of the article. It is never The Tweed or The Teviot; always Tweed and Teviot, Till and Tyne. "Tweed's in flood the day," "Till's verra sma'." That habit of mind, I have noticed, is universally evident in Tuscan speech, though very rare in that hot-house affair, Tuscan literature. I will lay the

Rivers and hills.

[1] One excellent reason (omitted) is that every reasonable man must have a volume of poetry by him, and that Dante is the only Tuscan poet.

odds against your finding it in Boccaccio. But the street urchins of Florence, the bargemen and dredgers of Empoli, the brickmakers of Rotta, and facchini of Pisa, never talk to each other, or even to you, of "the river" as we Londoners proudly use, never of The Arno. "Good fish in Arno"; "neap-tide in Arno." And so it is with small streams like the Arbia by Siena, or the Ombrone, or the Elsa, or that willow-hemmed Archiano which carried Buonconte's body to Arno and the sea. The people have always known them so, and the true poets, whose rhythm seems to represent the heart of the people at the highest beat—your Burns, your Dante, and Leopardi—have never known them otherwise.

Consider also how the ballad-mongers of the Scots border handled their brooks and bogs and hill-tops. Remember "Jamie Telfer of the Fair Dodhead"—a famous fragment of the Epic of Thieving:—

The ballad-mongers.

> He has turn'd him to the Teviot side
> E'en as fast as he could drie,
> Till he cam to the Coultart Cleugh,
> And there he shouted baith loud and hie.
>
> . . . . .
>
> Warn Wat o' Harden and his sons,
> Wi' them will Borthwick Water ride,
> Warn Gaudilands and Allanhaugh
> And Gillmanscleugh and Commonside.
>
> . . . .

> Ride by the gate at Priesthamswire
> And warn the Currors of the Lee;
> As ye cum doun the Hermitage Slack
> Warn doughty Willie of Gorrinberrie. . . .

What are these — Gaudilands and Allanhaugh, and the rest of them? They are people and they are lands; you can't separate them. The men grew from the soil, and took name and colour from it; the poet was but making music of them and their common speech. What else would you have him do?

Of whom Dante was one.

Return to Dante. There was the ballad-monger in him fast enough, down deep at the root of him. In a substantial sense his poem is a string of ballads, and, in that sense only, an epic. I don't think the man can ever be understood until that fact about him is accepted. Examples abound. Observe how he talks to Guido of Montefeltro about Romagna:—

> Ravenna sta come stata è molt' anni;
> L' aquila da Polenta là si cova
> Sì che Cervia ricopre co' suoi vanni.

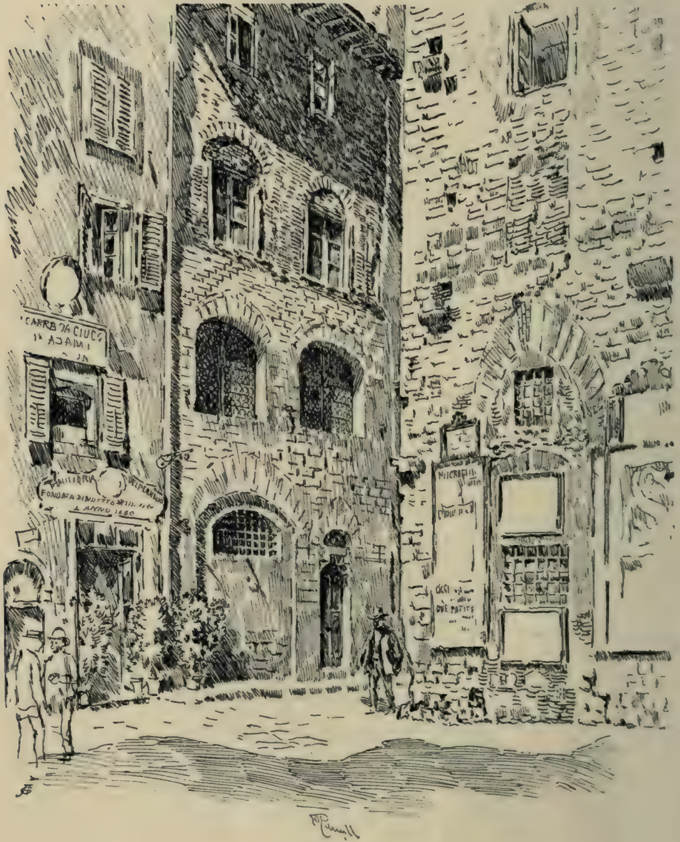
Is not that like the Hermitage Slack and "doughty Willie"? It is exactly like it.

Now go on:—

> La città di Lamone e di Santerno
> Conduce il leoncel dal nido bianco,
> Che muta parte dalla state al verno.

What are these cities which no geographer

marks on his map? The northern balladist who should sing of the towns of Tyne and Tweed



DANTE'S HOUSE.

would be understood to refer to Berwick and Newcastle by that periphrasis. So this Tuscan ballad-monger refers to Faenza on the little

Lamone and Imola by the little Santerno. The "leoncel dal nido bianco"? It is as if one should hit off the Percy as "the stiff-tailed lion"—which Sir Walter Scott would have done without winking, if he had chosen. And although, with Sir Walter, this periphrastic utterance was assumed and wilful, with Dante it was not. It was the language of his countrymen made splendid, turned from the uses of landmarks to those of high poetry.

See now how he personifies and individualises his rivers. Burns did that, and never found the same verb do for two of them—

Rivers were persons to Dante.

> Where Cart rins *rowin'* to the sea,

fairly hits off Cart. But it's

> Among the bonnie winding banks,
> Where Doon rins *wimplin'* clear,

when it's a case of the brawling Doon.

Here then is Dante :—

> Siede la terra dove nata fui
> Sulla marina dove Po discende
> Per aver pace co' seguaci sui.

Per aver pace—a lovely phrase! The river, in that sandy criss-cross of channels, was hunted, tormented, alive to him. So again of the Arno—

Chè dal principio suo, dov' *è si pregno*
L' alpestro monte, ond' è tronco Peloro,
Che in pochi lochi passa oltra quel segno

. . . . .

Tra brutti porci, più degni di galle,
Che d' altro cibo fatto in uman uso,
Dirizza prima il suo povero calle.
Botoli trova poi, venendo giuso,
Ringhiosi più che non chiede lor possa,
Ed a lor, *disdegnosa*, *torce il muso.*

So again of the birth of Adige in the Tridentine Alps, so of Arles "where *ponds* the Rhone," so of the Elsa, Arbia, Cecina. I suppose for once that he directs you by the name of a town, he chooses its river or hills nine times—and familiarly, and as being to being, as one to whom the world at large and in detail—meadow, grove, and stream, the earth and every common sight—is either host or fellow-adventurer. Our brother the earth; our sister the water; *Messer frate lo Sole.* Ah, but you need this in your companion of travel, especially if you are in any doubt as to whether you have it yourself.

It is no part of my business to prove to you that Dante could make pictures of travel.[1] But

Picture making.

the fact that he could make them with a terrible terseness, a terrible grip of the essentials, a terrible familiarity with the within and the without both of the thing seen and of

[1] See some in Appendix I. to this chapter.

the average beholder of it—for *terribiltà* is the word for such superhuman knowingness as his—that he could do it as nobody dead or to be born has ever succeeded or can ever succeed, is surely an uncommon good reason for taking him with you—you who wish to travel rationally. I agree with an accomplished and very wise traveller of our day who has lately advised the proper use of a guide-book to be *after* travel, and not before or during its performance. Let anticipation (always at its best without much material) and adventure have their fling. When you are at home in flat, orderly, green England, where the skies are softly grey, and the light slow to come and loath to go, where the lands are like parks and the towns like large villages; where the great stark towers, and square villas, the jutting cornices and dust-encloaked Madonnas of the street-corners have lost their edge and are, as it were, blurred in the hot mists of memory—then is the time to take to Dante, and read the canto beginning—

> In quella parte del giovinetto anno
> Che il sole i crin sotto Aquario tempra;

or Buonconte's—

> Li ruscelletti che dei verdi colli
> Del Casentino discendon giuso in Arno,
> Facendo i lor canali freddi e molli.

But I said that I should not quote pictures.

External nature, the forms, colours, and accidents of things—to the painters so much—are, in truth, little to him. He soon swings himself up to heights where none can surely reach after him. There is no poet in the round of Time more keenly alive to Nature, closer to her breast, or better nourished from that fount; but unlike Wordsworth he never gets drunk upon his bever. No fallacy, pathetic or other, interrupts the travel of his ordered mind. He never finds the dædal earth symptomatic of the divine thought, gets no spheral music from the singing wind.[1] Absorbed in what we have in us of incorruptible, he is attentive, rapt upon the hour when we shall put off this corruptible. In fact, he treats the things of sense as pastime, as utensils, as one may use one's happy chances; and throws them aside when he comes in touch with substantial things. Here he strikes quick into the heart of life, and his effects are so overmastering precisely because they depend so lightly upon the æsthetic and so deeply upon the ethic base. Moving as are the sights and sounds about him, poignant as the play he makes with them—the wailing story of Francesca, the knotting of snakes about the thieves, the pity of La Pia, or terror of Ugolino at pasture upon his enemy;

By the way in Dante.

[1] *Light* is the only phenomenon of ours which really gives him pause.

greatest of all, the reddening of the East and veiling of the sun when the cry goes up on the Purgatorial slopes, *Veni, sponsa de Libano*, and

> Sopra candido vel, cinta d' oliva,
> Donna m' apparve, sotto verde manto,
> Vestita di color di fiamma viva ;

it is neither the wringing of hands nor the shuddering of breath, nor the sight of red teeth or lascivious worms, nor the loveliness of woman, nor the piety of her love, which makes these images exquisite art and sublime poetry. No; it is the inner vision of the heart of them all, the well of tears, the seeding-pit of shame and sin, the leaping core of the fire of love; it is that second-sight of his which lifts him above us. He is a maker of images because he is a seër of them:—

> Io mi son un' che quando
> Amor mi spira noto, ed a quell' modo
> Che dêtta dentro vo significando.

But enough of such praises, which Dante is too great to receive and myself am not worthy to give. I return to Tuscany, and invite you to consider one more quality in his poem invaluable to the traveller, and that is his way of epitomising cities or nations in one figure —pathetic, terrible, monstrous, or lovely, as may

Epitomes of nations.

be, but standing, not without design, for the fortunes and features of his race.

HOUSE OF DANTE, PIAZZA DONATI.

Do not suppose yourself above, or below, the need of this. I say you cannot get on without it. There can never have been a traveller in

Italy who has not felt the urgent desire to disencumber, so as to be able, just for once, to have the whole vision of some storied place; to see, not the envelope of the thing, but the thing itself quintessentially. Verona, Pisa, Perugia—what does one see when one looks upon such as these? Beauty enough, God knows, of engirdling, blue, and awfully remote hills, of green plains, mulberry trees, garlanded vines, towers like ships' masts; a hint of wild and wicked old history in hiding, of industry unlike one's own—less strenuous apparently, and yet infinitely more strenuous really—of passions and beliefs which one can only wonder at, not share. All this you see at a glance, but in time something more, so vague and looming, so large as to be distressing. You find that you want to get the place embodied—like a Virtue or Vice in an old Morality, like a Theological Quiddity in an allegorical fresco; you want, at any rate, to get rid of the effect so that you may happen and pounce upon the cause. Enough of Verona and the Veronese! Enough of San Zeno and those other great solemn churches, of those balconied palaces and steep bridges, and blue and orange altar-pieces! Let me see Verona herself, that I may understand why it is all so beautiful and why on earth it moves me so much. This is the singular quality

of Italy—a land of a people never at one and never at rest, always fine in act, and always distinguished in its presentation—that at every turn of the road, and at every revolution of the centuries, she is able to stab you to the heart. Never say, then, that you can do without Dante; that is all nonsense. If Dante can dress you up the essence of half a hundred nations in half a hundred tragic figures, how the mischief are you to do without him? And that he has done that is certain; and that he did it on purpose is one of the articles of my belief.

Tragic figures of cities: Pisa.

How otherwise is it that Ruggiero and Ugolino stand, and always will stand for Pisa? All the traditional hatred of a Florentine, and all the just indignation of an honest man, are expressed in these two cantos of the *Inferno*, embodied in these two loathsome, fastened figures, and culminate in the scalding invective of the close—

> Ahi, Pisa! vitupero delle genti!

Dante has been accused of malice for this terrible business, and I am not about defending him from it. Being a Florentine, he had been more than a man if he had not hated Pisa; and that he was no more than a man is at once our hope and our justification. But when Landor takes upon him-

self to belittle one whose knees he could hardly hope to discover, I take upon myself to say that he only belittles himself. "Admirable, indeed," he says (or makes Petrarch say—Petrarch, forsooth!), "is the description of Ugolino to whoever can endure the sight of an old soldier gnawing at the scalp of an old archbishop." Let him scold as he will: undying sin, undying punishment; undying hate in man, everlasting condemnation in God—if such things must be done, it is thus they should be done by him who is able, and not otherwise. Let Landor build up his imaginary dolls' houses where he is and leave the Cosmos to his betters.[1]

Siena.

Of the many Sienese he treats, it shall be observed that the foolish, the hapless, or the atrociously arrogant, stand out above the rest for emblems of the tragic place. He certainly never concealed his opinion of that nation—

> Or fù giammai
> Gente si vana com' è la Sanese?

I don't think he thought them worth hating; he may have scorned them, perhaps. He gave them a kind of contemptuous pity: a gallant, feather-headed, high-flying, high-sniffing race,

[1] I think it is worth while to point out that the father of Ruggiero, upon whom, in hell, his guilty victim was fed, had himself been a glutton (24 *Purg.* 29).

and altogether unlucky! So he shows you in a strong light, *not* Provenzano Salvani, who, though he is there, makes little impression beyond pointing the moral of humility; but Sapia, who (in her hour of insane triumph) sang, says he, like a blackbird when the fine weather comes—

Come fa il merlo per poca bonaccia—

Sapia, who defied God; Albero, who tried to fly; and in seven of the most lovely wailing lines ever penned by man, La Pia, the helpless, betrayed, unhappy, wedded girl. Here, before Time and Existence, stands Siena.

Florence, Lucca, Pistoja, the Rugello, Romagna.

Who figures the virtues of old Florence if not Cacciaguida with his tales? Who the later, vexed State but Farinata, scornful of hell in hell? Like persons in a Morality they stand for more than themselves, are men as emblems walking. It may be mere coincidence—though I don't believe it—that of the modest-mannered Lucchesi Gentucca, shadow though she be, is the most significant, or that Vanni Fucci, "savage beast," is set up for Pistoja, a little city which did more robbery to the peace of Tuscany than many a bigger one; but it is most certain that in Guido of Montefeltro more than one man's sin—all the violent fraud of the Romagna—is prefigured.

And what of Francesca da Rimini? She was a lover, a sinner, and most unhappy: well, and was that all?

It may have been all. But who goes to Ravenna or to Rimini without finding her there, wringing her hands? And who follows the valley road among the bald hills, by Poppi and Bibbiena, and does not call to mind Buonconte, dying in the fog of the wound in his throat? Nobody for certain who has ever read the canto; nor will anybody ever see these places aright unless he do read. For of all the gifts in the world meet for travellers, this one of Dante's of *Romantic Apprehension* is the most precious.

Romantic apprehension.

I end as I began. Beatrice is not specifically Tuscan, nor is the *Summa* of Saint Thomas Tuscan in any sense; not for such things would I consider Dante now. But he himself, as he expresses himself in his august and piercing music, is the way to Tuscany. All that is specific in that stored plot of earth, all clean thought and tense expression, all passion, all partisanship, all the form, colour, and rhythm of a people who strove after such things (and got them), the art and the artifice, the exactness of knowledge and the thirst for more knowledge—all these things, which all the

Conclusion of this matter of Dante.

Tuscans have partaken, are within the covers of the Divine Comedy, essentially and substantially there. It is as true to say so, as it is to say that through Dante alone, and for his sake whom she drove out of her gates, Florence may bear the name of Crown of Tuscany. For assuredly, if Florence begat no greater man, Tuscany never lay in the hollowed hand of a more undoubted Florentine. His parts are all pure Florentine—the high heart, the hawk's eye, the biting tongue, the intolerant mind. In good measure or light every one of his fellow-citizens shared them. And so they do to this day. And as he was all—as in conversing with him you are in touch with what still lives in Florence—so he saw everything there, worth seeing, that we can see. The lines of country, the hills and the valleys, the rivers and the wells, are still what they were to his eyes: no one knew them better, and no one loved them more. The gaunt great castles you see there, fortresses of Signioria or Podestà or hill-robber, the scarred towers lonely on the mountains, were either weathered, battered, or crumbling when he turned his face to the north. The shining churches were all built or building; what his friend Giotto imagined on the walls of cloister or choir no man after him was to transcend. Of all those strifes and blood-sheddings,

which were the fruit of Florence's growing-pains, he was in the quick; he fought at Campaldino, knew of a truth what Corso Donati deserved, heard the passing of the Ordinances of Justice. Minute and curious lover of his land! with the lover's pricking jealousies and the long reveries of the lover, forget for a moment the divine poet and his soothsay, forget the green-eyed girl[1] whom he loved so wildly; and assure yourselves—or believe me—that there is no approach possible to his Tuscany but through his book and in his name.

APPENDIX I

DANTE'S PICTURES

His pictures of Italy are, of course, Italy itself; and if time were as plenty as love, it should be a profitable task to tabulate them.

There would be first his pictures which depend for their effect upon

1. *Close observation of one typical feature*—

> Come le pecorelle escon del chiuso
> A una, a due, a tre, e l' altre stanno,
> *Timidette atterrando l' occhio e 'l muso*—

the whole effect being got by observation of that dejected attitude of sheep, which everybody knows, but no one save a close observer would have identified.

Of the same order—the gesture of the blind beggars at

[1] She had green eyes.

church doors in the 16 Purgatorio. Thus he saw Sapia of Siena, standing as

> Se volesse alcun dir, Come?
> *Lo mento a guisa d' orbo in su levava.*

That pitiful, anxious gesture of the blind—who does not know it?

2. Next would come more detailed pictures—such as the stork on the house-top in the 25 Purgatorio—

> E quale il cicognin che leva l' ala
> Per voglia di volare, e non s' attenta
> D' abbandonar lo nido, e giù la cala—

extraordinarily realistic picture, where every word, every syllable counts. Or that again in the beginning of the 24 Inferno—"In quella parte del' giovinetto anno Che il sole i crin sotto Aquario tempra"—too long and too well known for quotation; which, however, in a dozen lines, draws the traveller a picture of the frosty spring morning on the hill side, which, if he knows, gives him a swelling of the heart to recognise, and if he knows not, displays it to him in all its sharp and delicate beauty.

3. Thirdly, there are the scenes which depend upon the touching of a heart-string, so to say—which stir the memory and set that to work picture-making. Of them, I suppose, the supreme example is Nazareth—

> Nazarette,
> Là dove Gabriello aperse l' ali—

a touch masterful and exquisite at once. Like that is the vignette of the delta of the Po by Rimini, which I have already quoted, and that which is equally fine of the Rhone at Arles and the litter of tombs—

> Sì come ad Arli ove il Rodano stagna
> Fanno i sepolcri tutto il loco varo.

Others of the same order give you the birds—

> Come augelli surti di riviera
> *Quasi congratulando* a lor pasture ;

and the lovely picture of the lark—

> Qual lodoletta che n' aere si spazia,
> Primo cantando, e poi tace contenta
> Dell' ultima dolcezza che la sazia.

4. Lastly, as far as I am concerned, for I have no time to elaborate it, there are scenes which depend mostly upon rhythm, assonance, subtle modulations, and choice of words—deliberately confected scenes, like

> Qual esce una volta al galoppo
> Lo cavalier di schiera,

which, to my ear, gives you the staccato, the very pounding of hoofs. Or, for another, take the sound of falling water in green places—

> Li ruscelletti che dei verdi colli
> Del Casentino discendon giuso in Arno,
> Facendo i lor canali freddi e molli.

And if I may choose a final one it shall be of the gathering of rain in the mountains—

> Indi la valle, come il dì fu spento,
> Da Pratomagno al gran giogo coperse
> Di nebbia, e il ciel di sopra fece intento.

Heaven made a tent, in fact ! But to test the extraordinary solemnity, the growing solemnity of all the passage, which culminates in this verse, and after it breaks out of tragic horror into pure weeping, and pity and mercy, that whole canto must be read—the famous 5th Purgatorio.

It is a commonplace of criticism to say that only the highest order of imagination can see such pictures as these in

their connection with alien events, and only the greatest art express them; and it should be another, though I cannot call to mind that it is—that Dante stands alone in Italian literature in the possession of it, except, I think, for a single example which can be got from Boccaccio. For imagination, in the strict sense, is more than conceiving, inventing, an act or a person outside experience: it is seeing this act or person *in the doing*, and so minutely as to be able to describe him. It is intellectual second sight; it is seeing things which, to us at least, are not there. The example I shall give you from Boccaccio—unique in him, I believe—is of Isabella cutting off her dead lover's head with a knife, "il meglio che potè"—"as well as she could." That is real second sight: he must have seen her at it. That is real imagination. Now Dante, as you know, is full of that. Not to encumber myself with examples—besides those which I have given you just now—I will remind you of two. Bertrand de Born with his carried head, "pesol con mano a guisa di lanterna." And how did St. James and St. Peter greet each other in Paradise?

> Si come quando il colombo si pone
> Presso al compagno, e l' uno all' altro pande,
> Girando e mormorando l' affezione,

which one might think was going further than was convenient with such an august couple, did one not feel convinced of the truth of it.

But there are other pictures to be considered—pictures of travel at large. Never, certainly, was there traveller before or since his day who was able to feel more closely or set down more exquisitely the sensations and emotions, the pains and triumphs, the wonders and terrors, sweet and bitter memories, the longings, the hopes, and the dreams which all travellers have tried to express, from Pausanias the folk-lorist to George Borrow the pedlar of Bibles. Traveller, whether he would or no, but a perfect traveller, inestimably quick to feel, and

incurably an observer, Dante is indeed the master traveller, the master guide to Italy; for his poem possesses the three indispensables to a travel-book: it inspires travel, it illuminates travel, and it recalls it.

Weather! How he was sensitive to that! You remember the dust-storm, the whirlwind that "dinanzi polveroso va superbo"? He touches the wreathing fogs, the rain, the frost and snow just like that. Of the last, there is that lovely reminder of the great idle flakes which drop like feathers on a windless Alp:—

> d' un cader lento
> Piovean di fuoco dilatate falde,
> Come di neve in Alpe senza vento.

And there you have one of a thousand instances of how he uses things he has observed to figure things he has imagined.

Then the time! As a man who must look abroad for it, he naturally knew more of that than we do, who carry it in our waistcoat pocket. There is no poet in literature who has observed so finely upon the hours of the day, and the signals of them—sun, moon, stars, tremblings, thrillings of light, calls and movements of beasts and birds. If one had his eyes one could time oneself exactly by the creatures. There are the rooks for dawn; and the swallows—

> Nell' ora che comincia i tristi lai
> La rondinella presso alla mattina;

the lizard for noon; and for his evening piece there is the famous passage beginning, "Lo giorno se n' andava"—which equals Shakespeare's "Night thickens and the crow Takes wing to the rooky wood." But all this is familiar stuff; and so, no doubt, are those which record the sensations of the march, which get themselves engraved upon every man's mind: enormous fatigue, wearisome ascents redeemed by sight of the sea or unfolded landscape; the longing for home at certain hours, or called up by certain sounds, bells especially; the

delays and indecisions about starting—a most truly observed thing :—

> Noi eravam lunghesso a 'l mare ancora
>
> So stayed we in that sea-bound spot,
> Like folk who, thinking of the march,
> Are all for going, yet go not.

One might drag out a catalogue of these telling strokes of his—of spiritual sensation as well as physical ; and I dare not omit one more, the most subtle and penetrative of all—of the traveller who at last faces what he has come out so far to see, some great painted or sculptured church, or Venice, perhaps, nested in the blue water, with spires and domes rising out of it ; and as he looks, frames in his mind the words with which he will describe it all at home :—

> E quasi peregrin che si ricrea
> Nel tempio del suo voto, riguardando,
> E spera già ridir com' ello stea.

I ought to allude also in this place to his power over the sights of the road, over all possible sights,—romantic, shocking, absurd, whatever they may be, castles like crowns, precipices, the cold, dead shadows of trees in high places :—

> Un' ombra smorta
> Qual sotto foglie verdi e rami nigri
> Sovra suoi freddi rivi l' Alpe porta ;

blazoned shields on the wall of the Podestà ; people—friars walking in single file, a great tournament in a field below the wall, crowds running over a bridge to see a show, a file of hesitating sheep peering down a mountain path ; minute particulars of access :—

> To Sanlèo up, to Noli down,
> To steep Bismantova you must climb
> On your two feet—— ;

the tongue of strangers—how they say "sipa" instead of "si" at Bologna; and I, for one, shall never forget my delight when I really did hear a man say "sipa" there. But there is no end to it! To inspire travel, or to recall it, these homely features of the poem should prove The Great Invitation to the Road.

APPENDIX II

BEATRICE AND OTHER CONCERNS

This is not the place to consider the plan of his poem, his great scheme of justifying God's justice, nor his political aims, nor the profundity of his long thought. It is well said by Benedetto Varchi that Beatrice "pronounces a discourse so learned and so subtle, that it would seem impossible that such and so many things could be confined within so few verses and such simple words." And another justly saith, "Many a time, and rightly, he owns to his impotency to clothe such lofty conceits; but the nobility with which he says that he can say nothing at all is an emblem of sovereignty; nor did ever the poetry of man speak so eloquently of God on high." All this is good and true; but to amplify it, or embroider with quotation, would take me too far. It would bring me back to the beginning of my story where I spoke of his knowledge of his immediate world. For what is strange is just this: with equal precision, with measurements as sure, he knows and can tell the contours and circumstance, the length, and depth, and height of the world *di là*. He travelled, but not far; he read, but not so widely Dr. Johnson. The souls he sees sousing in Hell, the painful initiates on the Mount of Purgation, the white-stoled Convent of Heaven, are gathered from a square of thrice ten-score miles, and represent the memories of a hundred years, or the thumb-marks of a few

classics. And yet his grip is so sure, and his scope so wide, you think that you see the whole world under his span. He was in that world, indeed, but not of it. As, when he had reached the eighth starry Heaven, he could look down through the seven spheres—

> E vidi questo globo
> Tal, ch' io sorrisi del suo vil sembiante—

so it had been with him since Love first raised him up. He could hold the spinning thing in his hand; there was no difficulty there. This it is to be a poet, if for once we may restrict the word to some half-dozen men since the fall of Troy, and exclude, for once, Sir James Steuart, Lord Godolphin, and Dr. Atterbury.

But for the machinery of his poem, what you may call its articulations, the parts of the diagram, I have the greatest possible sympathy—the equal number of cantos to each cantica, the happy trick whereby every great stage of the journey ends in hope or vision of the stars. I love the variegated pattern embedded in the Twelfth Purgatory, which is a small thing in itself, or the excess of reverence which will never allow "Christ" to be rhymed to anything but itself—perhaps a smaller thing—as much as the elaborate apposition of the Virtues and Sins, the whole great scheme of the Purgatory, which is made such a glorious tribute to the Madonna. These things tell me not only that he loved, but that he delighted in his immortal task. From the temper of his mind, as much as from his own words,[1] I should have judged that he planned every curve of the ornament before he set pen to paper, and should not be surprised at any time to learn that he worked out his similes on the same orderly plan.

[1] Compare the end of the Purgatory:—

> Ma perchè piene son tutte le carte
> Ordite a questa cantica seconda,
> Non mi lascia più ir lo fren dell' arte.

A poet loves to bit and bridle his fancy, to tame the lovely wild thing, and teach it the manège. And, after all, these measured paces are of the essence; and if a sonnet hath fourteen lines, there is good reason that an epic should have fourteen thousand and no more. Let this be remembered also, that artifice, elaborate design, was the great outlet of Tuscan art. The really great men—Giotto, Donatello, Lionardo—had more of it than the smaller fry, in the measure of their greater need. Artifice is the safety-valve of the surcharged heart. So Dante has more than Petrarch, Boccaccio more than Sacchetti; for passion drives them harder. But this and the like considerations are excursions from the way; and so is Beatrice, upon whom I am tempted to linger. That green-eyed enchantress, that vivid, circumspect, alert beauty must needs move one who serves the man who served her.

As for her, signs are not wanting that her nostrils had stirred the quicker for him. Devout and prostrate lover though he were, he could not but observe her truly. Let the allegory-mongers, who would rob her of her twenty years' young blood, consider the Thirtieth Purgatory. Is that the reproach of Theology against Physics? *Via!* And what again of her words to Matelda? "Take him to Eunoë," says she,

> And at thy wont
> Quicken his valour perished half.

Is pique wholly absent? Was Matelda this "altra"? At least, is not Beatrice conscious of magnanimity? I think so. Of his own feeling there can be no doubt, for he has suffered none to remain. When she came to him, after that wonderful overture—Matelda, the Earthy Paradise, the mystic Procession (was ever such honour paid lady before?)—when she came to him, I say, in her flame-coloured robe, girdle of olive, and green cloak, before he was worthy to look upon her eyes, what does he say but—

> D' antico amor sentì la gran potenza ?—

Is this a cry from the heart yearning for theology? Did anything ever move such ecstasy of homage but love? The most subtle passage in the whole of the comedy is perhaps that which lays bare his heart's whole idolatry, where he speaks of

> Quella riverenza che s' indonna
> Di tutto me, pur per BE e per ICE.

The mere written syllables of the adored name possess and dominate him. He loved this green-eyed girl and, because he loved, freed his immortal part, and towered higher than any of the sons of men. For if our Milton heard God speak, this man dared look Him in the face, take his stand with Saint John and Saint James below the burning throne of heaven, and see his beloved assumed into the very heart of Mary. This it is to be a lover. If he paid more than lover's honour to a green-eyed girl, what did she not do for him? She gave him strength to soar, taught him the mystery of Beauty and Desire, "imparadised his mind." Who she was, or what, whether gentle or simple, maid, wife, or widow, a beauty or a scold, tall or short (I myself believe she was a little woman), it is no matter. She imparadised his mind. He repaid her with such sort as no woman, save the Queen of women, has ever received of man. But she had given him the keys of heaven. It is enough for us to be sure that she was lovely and good, had green eyes, and died young. To which I add for my private contentation—that she was a little woman.

CHAPTER III

THE HILLS AND THE VALLEYS

HERE, since we are about to embrace the mountains which cut Liguria off from Tuscany, seems the proper place for a little geography. Here, for instance, is a good problem for the traveller, to make good the fact that every considerable city he visits now will be found in the plain, whereas formerly each was on a hill-top. And here, if I had the ripe wisdom of old Dennis, or the orderly pragmatism of Herr Baedeker, would be the place for me to be learned in discourse upon the Etruscans, the Latins, and the Romans. Alas, I am but a roadster with an eye for humours. Sound upon inns and innkeepers, I am to seek in hegemonies and the Lucumons. *Vacuus viator* I stand confessed, vague enough. But if, in M. Renan's phrase, I can "inform my vague," why, then, I shall have done something.

Geographical musings.

The Grand Duchy of Tuscany, speaking

roughly, makes an equilateral triangle, whose base shall be the Maremma, running as the Mediterranean lies, from north to south. The angles of the base are the Magra bridge, which we have crossed, and the Orbetello isthmus, which we are to visit. The apex is La Verna, above the Casentino. Bisecting the base, more or less exactly, you have the Val d' Arno, which (with the Val di Chiana) is the only considerable plain in the country. Florence, though it is not the true, is the political middle, since it commands both road and waterway alike. A captain could hardly take his host from Milan to Rome without coming to terms with the Florentines; nor could the Aretines reach Genoa. If for no other reason, Florence was bound to get supremacy. So here you have the state of the case. Florence and the best land are in the midst; north and east of her are the Apennines—better outposts could not be. West of her are the sea and a strip of barren, inhospitable, salt-scourged coast. South of her are ridges of limestone hills, parallel as racing waves, with close valleys between them, and in every valley a grey-green languid river. But where Arno runs from east to west, and shapes the plain to her mood, these limestone hills run south to north and the rivers march with them. Among these town-crested waves of rock our

course is to be. On every ridge, on every spur

THE PIAZZA, MONTALCINO.

or fault of a ridge, you will have a town. All the massed nations of Tuscany were to be found

once above the vale of Arno, or upon these southern hills. There were none worth consideration in the Apennines: the Etruscans, when they left the south for the north, kept by the sea. And there are none there now; but for a different reason. The plain has sucked in all.[1]

In the victorious year (1254), when Florence humbled one hill-nation after another, she found Volterra a huddle of old buildings within vast,

[1] The sea may well have flowed over Florence once, perhaps, indeed, to Arezzo; but three headlands will have acted as groins and silted up a foothold for a city: these are the Monte Pisano, now by the Serchio made an island of rock; the Cerbaje, islanded also by Nievole; and Monte Albano, which only a narrow pass cuts off from the bulk of the Apennines. A great creek would have run up north to Pistoja and Montagnana; but fishes would have spawned where now the people of Prato and Signa are at work. All this plain, in fact, is reclaimed stuff—alluvial deposit, tidal silt, *detritus*—the work of Ombrone, Nievole, Guanciana, and Serchio, with Arno and Sieve working west from the Gran' Giogo. There the life-blood of Tuscany, as I say, is pooled—Pistoja, Prato, Arezzo, Florence, Empoli, Lucca, Pisa, Leghorn; naming these, you name all that really lives—though in the Val di Chiana there is now a stirring towards birth. Once the gallant blood coursed by every winding valley, by every brook and swamp, from the cities of the hills. That was in a day when a man brought his stuff to market or the ships on a mule's back, or defended it in his citadel high among the rocks. But that was before history, which cannot reckon the time when Volterra or Chiusi, Ansedonia or Tarquinii, would compare in riches with Florence and Leghorn. In those days Florence and Leghorn were not: in these, where are Volterra and Ansedonia?

> See Luni, Urbisaglia pass,
> And after them how flicker and fade
> Chiusi and Sinigal'—alas!
> When this house makes that house a shade,
> A smoky name, what news is this,
> If cities wreck the state they made?

indestructible, indefensible walls—too big, indeed, for either consummation—Volterra! a chief city

A STREET IN MONTALCINO.

once of the Etruscan hegemony. The others were in much the same plight—Montepulciano, Montalcino, Cortona, Massa, Asciano—villages

graced like cathedral cities, shadows of great shades. It was not altogether that they had been rent from within; they were derelict, the blood had left them and flowed down to enrich the plain. Siena was the last, which might have gone one of the first; but there was reason in this. Siena, like Florence, held the highway to Rome, and a clean road.

"Who builds rock-cities must himself be rock."

That a man should have built for himself a city upon a hill must be taken to mean that he were content to go tired to his bed, so only that he might be sure to find his wife in it, his children and gear safely embanked about it. In other words, he had been down to that extremity where the shift was to keep his skin whole, rather than to render it sleek by comfort or to adorn it with raiment. Not far removed from the blinking cave-dwellers, his grandparents, or his great-uncles, the long-toed folk who nested in trees,[1] so built the first founders of the Tuscan Grand Duchy; and so, for reasons of their own, the successive invaders of the land elected to dwell. For, obviously, where there had been safety for the robbed, there would be immunity for robbers.

[1] The mind can form a pleasant picture of the Amsterdamers who, Erasmus says, before they took to pile-driving, lived on tree-tops—like rooks.

All the cities of the plain—prosperous Florence, coy Lucca, and the rest—were offshoots from these eyries of the rocks, desperately sought and late in time, for the sake of the waterway. Thus, in John Villani's time the Samminiatesi came down from their citadel and built themselves a

ARNO, FLORENCE.

San Genesio by Arno, imitating so the "antico popolo maligno" who had stocked Florence from the crag of Fæsulæ and prospered in spite of all, as they were bound to do. For it is most certain that a people who would thrive in that rude air would batten on the glebe below. No hoeing in the rocks down there, as the Carrarese

must painfully do. That they did thrive history will prove, if a glance of the eye do not.

Dismay came slowly to the hillmen upon the leisurely flood of history; but the temptations to desert their lurking-dens were great. River and level road wash money out on the ebb, to bring it back doubled on the flood. The hillmen, watching from their too quiet citadels, saw markets rise in the lowland country, shipyards afforested, argosies gather, and the waterways fill them in spite of the ambushed roads. Sale and barter, with the means of buying the one thing needful—which was courage—raised up a new people, to whom the old, be they never so hardy, must in time give place. For this also, in the nature of hill-towns, is not to be neglected, that, built as refuges *from* robbers, they first became refuges *for* them, and, next, their traps. By so much as these strongholds were safe, by so much the more they might be dangerous; and if it were hard for the pursuers to get in, by the same token it was not easy for the pursued to get out. One by one the Frankish chiefs, robbers to a man, lords of the hill-towns—Uberti, Ubertini, Ubaldini, Alberti, Aldobrandeschi, Guidi, Pannocchieschi—were prevented in the harms they did, submitted, and came in to the cities of the

Drawbacks.

plain. Either they were betrayed thither, bribed

OLD FLORENCE.

thither, or (being let alone) starved thither. By the time the Florentines had struck their coin of

fine gold there was no hill-nation in all Tuscany which was not either in their power or tending surely beneath it. These things were certainties, in the very nature of the hypothesis.

Characteristics of the remnant.

But now, here also is an obvious thing, that if the ingathering of the upland clans was a Cadmus-sowing for the lowland communes—as no doubt it was, with Guelf-and-Ghibelline wars, Black-and White wars, and endless bedevilment to come out of it—assuredly, also, what was left behind, to push about as best it might upon the bare rocks, was a still hardier seed. Judge them by what they are now: rugged, cold-eyed men, stern-faced women, bearing and nourishing imps of whipcord, they seem to have been. And their tools, and their gowns, their churches and gods, like them, you would have said. And so it is. Not only are the hill-towns of Tuscany the more ancient, but they are the more lasting; they have more character, testify more certainly of themselves. Once seen, the least of them stands up at call, child of a fierce family, with the general carriage of the whole blood—that gaunt hospitality, that offhand welcome, those eyes bare and bold which they all show you; but with a specific aspect of its own, a look unmistakable, a gesture, some trick which singles it out a self-sufficient,

responsible entity. "Here stand I, such-an-one, naked and empty upon my crags, content to be so. And you! what's your will of me?" This is how the Scots appear to us comfortable Englishmen; it is how the hill-men appear to

THE PIAZZALE, FLORENCE.

the Tuscans of the plains. It is the way of them all, however differently they may intone it.

There's for the hill-men; and here's for the hill-towns. How they partake of the chances of the ground, enhance them and insist upon them! I shall never see Radicofani again; but it remains for ever in my mind's eye as I saw it last: a pale cone of rock, wrapped deep in a thunder-cloud.

While we upon the plain walked in light dust, methought in Radicofani the rain was sluicing the streets. Impenetrable, afar off—another climate was theirs. They were familiar with storms; for storms were brewed before their thresholds. Town and rock were indistinguishable; the rain engulfed all. Town and rock are mostly indistinguishable; it is characteristic of the site that the buildings should lengthen the vantages of the ground; and yet, when you have seen many, you will not be able to say that you have seen two alike. Montepulciano, with one blunt tower, climbs grandly beyond her mountain, and culminates the pyramid with a truncheon of dark red; San Miniato de' Tedeschi clusters about hers behind grey walls, and then shoots up into a single tall shaft, whose mitred crest can be seen from Pisa. And what of Siena, the queen of all the hill-towns? Lovely from every side, from far off she seems to float over her green down like a scarf of cloud; from nearer in the colour of the place strikes you first: it seems pure rose and white, with a pearl-grey dome to give it value, and two towers like wings to lift it up. San Gimignano has a forest of square towers, all the world knows; Asciano has a beautiful cupola; Volterra gives a dull jut forward into the marly wastes, like a headland into a lumpy sea.

Cortona is littered down her hill-side like a

ON THE PONTE VECCHIO.

disused cemetery—just as the tombs at Arles,

"dove Rodano stagna," pied the place in Dante's eye; Massa Maritima winds about hers like a spiral stair, and reaches at last a great square castle upon the crest. And so with all of them, alike in difference: Montalcino, a fringe of building upon a spur of Amiata; Colle hemming a shoulder of the hills with palaces and gateways; and then brown Barga, and then Poggibonsi, and then Certaldo, so ruddy and so blithe—who that has seen them can fail to store them in separate guest-chambers of the mind? A tinge of colour, a scar, a rent in the flank, a bragging tower, a tree like a torn flag, a loggia thrust up like a fault in the rocks, some infallible sign there will be, so that none can ever be mistook. As trees grow distinctive if they grow apart, so it is with these soaring towns, derelict now and "emptied of their folk," that they have their fate printed deeply in the face, and that their few indwellers have kept the character which made their windy habitations what they are.

Manners and customs; wind and rain.

The railways pass them by, hugging road or river; the traveller, unless he be of the true breed, is never long in their streets. Their people, it is said, lack civility. Their people are at great pains to be civilised at all; in a question of existence manners are of less account than strong lungs.

They have stood, do you see, for ever under martial law, in a state of warfare with an enemy for ever on the move. For they are encompassed with a great air, to which their own lintel, their very roof-thatch may be an ambush. All day long a keen wind blows. Those light horse-

RADICOFANI.

men of the storm—scouring rain, sheeted snow, mist that outflanks them and drives them in upon their supports—are never out of the field. So man, woman, and child must keep the walls. Your young man goes cannily to his labour and drags home extended to his bed. Your young lass shading her untouched bosom, shrouds her

filleted hair, neither seeking nor shunning to be admired, watchful only of the weather. You cram your hat about your ears, heedless of her passing; you set about your business, brevity the soul of it. There is no chaffering at ease in sunny piazzas, nor horse-play, nor burnishing of door-posts with the shoulder-blades, nor dalliance with maidens at upper windows. The windows are closed down, and your fingers will be too stiff for the lute-strings: marriage here, like all other commerce, is an affair of the defences. Who will get me children to fight the weather? Let me feel thy heart-beats, my love, before I take thee home. Life here is a campaign, a Spartan business. All these lithe young men and women know *askêsis*. Their *palæstra* are none less than 2000 feet above the level, and are vaulted by the wind-harried sky. Their games are harsh; a man will get, in John Knox's phrase, "a bloody cockscomb" more often than enough; their pageants are blunt and bitter shows, swiftly done and little adorned. Splendour due to the Church! How shall you glorify a God who demands that the candles shall keep alight? Nay, the gods they worship are in their own image. Their Madonna may well have been Scythian Artemis in the beginning—delighting in arrows. Thus it is that the hill-wind

scourges the vanities and little pleasant vices out of the hill-towns, where no man of the plains can live long unenrheumed.[1]

Of these shrill camps, as of their opposites, the more thriving cities of the plain, I shall have to speak in the ensuing pages. Either kind has its peculiar charm; I am the last person in the world to deny the graces of Lucca, the pride of Pisa, or the sweet French allure of these latter days of Arezzo. Nor is it permitted to deny that the lowlands could breed heroes, since Castruccio Castracane was born in Lucca, and Uguccione della Faggiuola in Arezzo; and thence also came Bishop Guido Tarlati, the stormiest prelate that ever swung an axe. Howsoever far the mountain blood of earlier generations may have stiffened the stock of Antelminelli, Uberti, or Visconti, these houses of Florence, Lucca, and Pisa remained to give good accounts of themselves in the plain.

Enemies of the plain.

But the plain, as well as the hill, has its peculiar enemies, and has bred men to cope with them. There is, of course, the water, which, streaming

[1] In Siena, to be sure, there is more bravura and more pleasure, but (whatever may be said) little effeminacy. *Molles Senæ:* the term implies the sleekness of the feline; the Sienese were always tigerish in pleasure or pain. Even there, their games are savage, their pageants of flag-flaunting best done in the wind. As for the *Palio*, any plain man who has seen it will agree that it is better to be horse than rider in that clamorous scurry round bare pavements.

from a thousand hills, will raise the Arno in half an hour from a brook in a pebbly beach to an angry flood descending like a wall against the bridges. I myself have seen the river over the Ponte Vecchio. Well, they have dyked and banked out Arno; they have drained the Val di Chiana, and turned the Val di Serchio into a fruitful market garden. There are good gardeners in those parts, men who know how to shape a tree. But one foe they have against whom they are powerless, before whom they cower and skulk: I mean the sun. He is the great enemy, he and his allies—dust, flies, fleas, pestilence, and a too early maturity. It is the sun's doing that the whole countryside is a bleached, hag-ridden wilderness by mid-June; and under the stroke of him, in the fetid streets, the people slink from one strip of shade to another, and live only by night. Close-barred, blank, and torpid by day, you might be in a city of dead men: the people, pale prisoners, get to loathe the very edge of a ray of light. This is why, in such towns as Florence and Pisa, you appear to be far in the south, whereas in Fiesole or the Garfagnana you are still in the blessed temperate zone. The people are at once languid and dangerous; there is much love and much stabbing. Any day in the week a man may be knifed—or a girl either—in

the piazza of Florence: and the reason? Jealousy or despair:[1] love down there can be as cruel as the grave.

Business, too, by which these cities were called into being, has had its effect. You can see that in Ghirlandajo's portraits and in Gozzoli's; you see it still in Bronzino's and Sustermann's.

CHIUSIDINO.

The Florentine is a hard man, the Lucchese a stiff-backed man, the Aretine a restless man; but of this there will be opportunity to speak later on. Character, character, character must be the cry—character, generic and specific, in a territory which contains a thousand nations. What sets a hill-nation apart from another of the vale? What

[1] The other day, in Grosseto, there was an epidemic of love-tragedies: homicides and suicides: fifteen cases.

sets one hill-town apart from another? What stamps a bluff Certaldese girl as different clay from a daughter of San Gimignano, fair, frail, and pleading, yet only five miles away? Why can one never mistake the Roman sternness of Volterra for the accipitrine trick of Siena? Wherein do the Lucchesi differ from the Pisani, and how does one know that some square-shouldered, straight-answering *fattore* comes from San Quirico d' Orcia? Here be questions: to which one answer is that all these several peoples have battled it out among themselves. Only the hardiest and truest to type have come through, those in whom some double portion of their father's spirit has leapt. Like has bred like; hill-man cleaves to hill-woman, and she can abide in no other man's arms. Nor are there any pillars of salt on the way to the hills, since no wife has ever been tempted thither from the plains.

The inquiry.

And now Arno invites, the roads are open, spring calls like a cuckoo over the land. Let those who wish to see Uccellatojo again follow me.

CHAPTER IV

YOU CROSS THE MAGRA—SAVONA TO SPEZZIA, SARZANA, FOSDINOVO

THERE are mulberries in the valley of the Ardèche, but olives in the Rhone valley; and here is one sign for the old-fashioned traveller that he is leaving the pleasantest country in Europe for his affair—France, the one country in a whole continent where the amenities are reckoned a sound investment, and millions a year sunk in them—that he is leaving France, I say, and nearing Italy, the land where people never grow up. Across that noble vale you find almonds, rock-rose, Mediterranean heath, ilex woods, all in flower by May; and little towns—Viviers, Orange, Salon, Aix, Saint-Maximin—very Italian in character, whose high houses have bare holes for windows, whose close streets are always in shade, whose colour is of the drab dust. If it were not that the country remains intensely green, that the agriculture is

The Rhone Valley.

better—more spacious, more able, better ploughing and better sowing—there are half-hours in the Rhone valley when you might swear you were in Southern Tuscany. At Saint-Maximin especially, I remember handsome, blowsed girls gossiping at their doors, children, brown and half-naked, dogs and men asleep together at noon, old folk roasting coffee, sitting at ease in the kennel; colour, too, that most deceiving of all accidents—how these places are weathered like the rocks to a warm brown, and how the Durance, deep, broad, and very swift, repeats the clayey note of all: Tuscan sights! I knew I was near to my desire. But you don't really leave France until you are through Fréjus.

The Cornice and the Riviera.

The Esterel, that range of tedious hillocks, of fir-trees and ant-heaps, is of any land; Cannes and the rest of them are what man and his wicked lusts have chosen them to be—Rue de Rivoli, Hurlingham, Maidenhead, Aix-les-Bains, Wiesbaden, Homburg: here, no less than in the Riviera, modern Israel has set up its gods, and I declare it is hard to tell one house of Rimmon from the other. I desire to speak with respect of what affords yearly gratification to a number of rather respectable persons; but if this once famous road is still beautiful, if Nice is a fine city, if new Cannes is

an improvement on old Cannes, why, I am

IN THE HEART OF THE MOUNTAINS, CARRARA.

egregiously wrong. But what is left of that ancient seaport seems to me to be as good as

it is Italian: a yellow and white town clustered about two battered towers upon a hill, the remains of an old anchorage and quay, fishing-boats in shape like triremes, purple-brown sails stretched to dry—all these are excellent good things, not to be exchanged for a wilderness of palm-trees, nor for all the roses withering in the dust above glaring villa-walls. Nature is strong and masterful when her limit of endurance is reached; but the Riviera is still endeavouring to earn its tidal wave, and in the meantime trash, vulgarity, and dust make even the roses an eyesore, and even the orange-flowers to stink.

Ventimiglia to Alassio.

This Ligurian sea-board declares itself to be Italy, and above all North Italy, by that specious building which all Italy loves, but none so well as they between Alp and Apennine; that kind which pretends—and proves—that anything may be done upon high ground with plaster and a little water-colour. By these means pasteboard churches look like heavenly habitations, of shining white marble, porphyry-veined; by these means the architects of great Milan made the world gape at the matchless fan-tracery of their roof; by these means a man having no pretty daughter at home, or no window for her convenience, painted both window and beauty looking forth from it, and thought every-

thing very well. I can admire the gaiety of the performance without commending it as fine art. A naked, brick-red Bacchus astride a barrel, with naked boys to hold garlands about him (and make matters worse by affecting to conceal what indeed they do not); the Saviour of the world, as a child on his mother's knee; a frieze of fighting centaurs; sphinxes, torches, hermæ, cornucopias, Daphne, tuneful Apollo;—one or all of these portents painted upon the outside of your house furnish evidence that your convictions are more humane than mine, whatever there may be to say of your taste. For they show that you have found out that it is worth your while to spend money upon ornament; they show that art is not a luxury for the rich, but rather a necessity for all. This belief the Ligurians share with most of the Italian nations, and with the French nations.

Like their eastern neighbours, the Venetians, these builders of Liguria have been strongly affected by the barbarians. The belfries of their churches are minarets, slim shafts of whitewashed brick or rubble; very often they are finished with a cupola like the bud of a tulip; very often they gleam with green, blue, yellow tiles. And to carry the semblance further, if you will let your fancy play with the notion, you will see that the little towns with which this

Ligurian building.

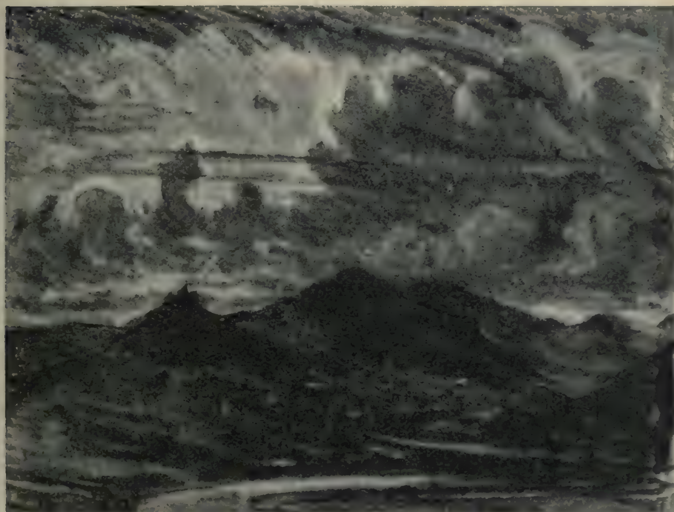
shore is strung—until the white long road from Mentone to Rapallo seems like a chaplet—are but *khans* or *kasbahs*, all of one piece, all for one great household; whose covered streets are the corridors, whose piazzas are the courts wherein live the women, the eunuchs, the janissaries, and the great Bashaw himself. Add to all this oriental impress the gay façades, all the gimcrackery of which I have spoken above, and you have the Ligurian sea-board which once boasted Genoa for its culmination, but cannot now.[1] At least it cannot boast so to me, who have seen Savona.

Savona.

This ancient Ligurian city possesses—with an accent, so to speak—all that distinguishes all the rest. It has a port, with citadel and lighthouse to overlook it; arcaded piazzas, streets with upper galleries across and across, garlanded all with geraniums; painted houses, also, of the happiest, most ridiculous

[1] On Evelyn's journey, nothing, I think, impressed him more than Genoa. The site and aspect of the town—"never was an artificial scene more beautiful to the eye"; the "sudden and devilish passion of a seaman"; San Pietro d' Arena with "the ravishing retirements of the Genoese nobility"; the mole of the harbour, of which he says, "Of all the wonders of Italy, for the art and nature of the design, nothing parallels this." Here are some of the wonders he saw. As late as Dickens' tour, too, Genoa held her old pride. Nearly all of this is gone now. I saw the place again this year, after an interval of twelve. One hardly knew it. Gray, by-the-bye, considered Genoa "amiable"—a phrase of excessive urbanity.

and most touching exuberance. Nothing more elaborate can be conceived; it is like a formal garden. If the reader can recall Crivelli's vision of a galleried city—it is in his little *Annunciation* in the National Gallery—where the ornate house-fronts are bound together by bridges (the street,



THE ROAD TO BOLOGNA.

in fact, being treated as a Venetian canal), he will discover Savona to be its counterpart, if it is not its original. Then, cheek by jowl with this stately economy of the land, is the litter of the marine: the dirty, crowded little harbour, the shipping and the sea. Here you have streaked water, peacock green, oozy posts barred black and white, feluccas,

galleys, caravels, barques, and brigantines; the rock of the citadel, the lighthouse, an ancient belfry with a cupola, shapely and tall old houses—all impending, crazy and wild: a fine savage effect. Liguria has not anything to show more fair than Savona.

After Genoa.

Once past it, once past Nervi, where you can breakfast with ease and no great loss of pence, you reach successively Chiavari and Sestri, two fine long towns of a narrow street apiece; but between them—just beyond Chiavari—you cross a certain river which no reader of Dante can see unmoved. It is the Lavagna, whence the blood of a certain Pope took its boast.

> Intra Siestri e Chiaveri si adima
> Una fiumana bella, e del suo nome
> Lo titol del mio sangue fa sua cima—

says Pope Adrian VI., whose family were Counts of Lavagna. Terrific verb—*adima!* but it must refer to what goes on amid the wooded spurs above; for here, where the road crosses, the Lavagna rolls a broad and comfortable course over pebbles and beneath the great bridge, and soon comes to terms with the sea. It is, however, to be said that the traveller by road has opportunity more than enough to judge the length of Lavagna's leap from the rocks. As soon as he

is out of Sestri he must address himself to the Apuan Alps, and toil circuit after circuit of steep ascent to the famous pass of Bracco. It is called 2014 feet in the books, but must be more certainly 3000. Up that and through that your carriage must go, as best may be; and the odds are short but that you will be, as I was, in the clouds. Out of summer, sunshine, and the drone of bees one went into a driving mist; one groped for the way, one fought for it; and one emerged into the lovely blue again, with the sea in full sight, and Spezzia locked in its bay, far below, and the great ships at rest there. Midway your climb, if you will rest upon a parapet, you gain a broad view of the Apuans across a gulf, which runs down sheer from your feet into a tossing tide of green growth. Beyond it, as it were, buttressed by shoulders of rock, the mountains rise to snowy altitudes, to clouds and blue isolation; but below that line they are very brown in colour, seamed and deeply fissured, winking in heat. One little grey mountain village perches on a bluff; over the long interval you may hear the bell for vespers calling softly. There is nothing else to make you mindful of man and his makeshifts—nothing else but rock and sky.

So you may think, or so thought I, until, resting there, I was aware of a solitary, painful

traveller, who, straying down the road by which I had still to climb, paused for comfort and conversation. A brown old French outcast he proved to be, shoeless, tattered, wounded in the feet, but extraordinarily mild of aspect. In truth, half his wits had been baked out of him by savage suns; and though he had a wild and wandering eye it was entirely harmless—a roe's eye half startled, half confiding. A staff in one hand, he carried in the other a very small pannikin of spring water, most of which was spilled by a trick he had of gesticulating with the hand that held it. He offered me of it, but I could not deprive him of the poor dregs. Ile de Bourbon had burned him up; he knew Trafalgar Square (his bed-chamber, I fear, for some dripping nights); Germany, Spain, Italy from thigh to toe. Nothing but a sunstroke had kept him from Greece, and no deprivation in his life, said he, had affected him more. To have seen Athens, now! Ah, what a city! So he sighed, raising his horny hands, not in rage or despair, but gently always, and as if with some sense of quiet irony. A simple and wildered old Ulysses,—his name was Lujarric,—it seemed as if his mind was now on its travels, still doing what his poor body had worn itself out over trying. Sunstruck at Ile de Bourbon, drenched in Trafalgar Square,

The exile.

wandering now over the Bracco, dreaming of Greece, Athens and Thebes!

Not that he had not worked as he journeyed; far from that. He had his certificates of employment from half a hundred masters, and showed me them all neatly pasted into a *cahier*. He had been a soldier in his day, in the *Chevaux Legers*.

SPEZZIA.

I thought he might have cheered the Emperor. Later, a coachman, then a teamster, I understand, always with horses until he lost his nerve. Now, he said, that being gone, he was about to embrace the profession of mendicancy. Undaunted old patron of a pair of wounded feet! to enable him to die upon the road, as I am sure his desire was, he would commence beggar! I passed half an hour of talk with him; he spilt all his spring

water; I started him upon his new career; we saluted and went our ways—he down to Genoa, I to Spezzia.

The Magra.

Of Spezzia I have no more to say than this, that it prospers and fills you with an agreeable sense of prosperity. It is full of pleasant shade, of grass, and good houses; it has an admirable, old-fashioned inn, called the Croce di Malta, and a head waiter in it exactly like Colonel Newcome. But all this need detain you no longer than it did me, for being all agog for Tuscany, I did but dine and sleep at Spezzia. Missing then the way—I or my driver—we had to climb a hill to get back into the Sarzana road; but, by so doing, made Pitelli, a handsome village, and had a prospect of Lerici, where Shelley, with Keats and Sophocles in his jacket pockets, got himself drowned. Pathetic memory of a man not all a fool seems to make the pines dreamy down there; and strange memory assails one of the scene, half mummery, half earnest, which was enacted over his wet remains. Here, on a woody peak jutting into a sea more than common blue, they raised the smoke of sacrifice. Here the *cor cordium*—or, by the account, all but that—became earth of the earth. Fine, cocksure spirit! here by means of fire he too attained certification

of a thing or two of which, perhaps, he had been too sure in his day. His views of Italy and the Italians, I take this place to say, were as distorted as those others of his concerning the Christian religion, the British constitution, and other establishments.

A great river, broad and blue, is that which

> per cammin corto.
> Lo Genovese parte dal toscano.[1]

Short it may be, and they call it the shortest in Italy; but it receives two tributaries before it embrowns the sea, and has a delta three miles broad. Pause on the bridge, on the dividing line between Liguria and Tuscany, for the prospect and retrospect alike are fair. Behind you see Tribbiano, blocked on a high spur, with a pink church and the ragged side of a castle. Over the river before you, are Sarzana, the Apennines, and all the Tuscan demesne. In the Grand Dukes' days there was a frontier post here, with a dogana amid-bridge, and sentries posted along the banks. Anxious gentlemen, like the Cavaliere Casanova, could not breathe comfortably till they were on one side or the

[1] Fazio degli Uberti, too, has a fine verse about this river :—

> Io vidi uscir la Magra dalle fasce
> Del giogo d' Apennin, ruvido e torbo,
> Che dell' acque di Luni pur si pasce.
> *Dittamondo*, iii. 6, 10.

other; and the side on which they could breathe happened always to be the other. Now, be our occasions what they may, there is neither solace nor tension for them on Magra Bridge. Nobody was in sight but a sand-carter, whose patient oxen winked their eyes as they stooped to the yoke, and a few boys at bathing, who gathered about the carriage and wondered at the strange person I was. They were very pleasant lads, answered all my questions, even ventured a few of their own. When we started they ran a few dozen yards into Tuscany with me, in gay emulation of my career. Tuscan or Genoese, all's one now.

Sarzana.

If I had lit upon the thriving little Sarzana first of all the cities of Tuscany, I should have admired more than I did. But the first of them that ever I saw was Pistoja, and Pisa was the second. Having held up my hands in such sanctuaries, I can't sing *Nunc Dimittis* in Sarzana. It is Tuscan, and good Tuscan of its kind: an oblong white church, with a striped marble façade, square stone belfry relieved with marble pillars in its windows; arcades in some of the streets; some poor Della Robbia ware. Such things there are in the *Chiesa Grande* and streets about it. There is also a finely coffered wooden ceiling in this church — *seicento* work and the colour of an

old fiddle. It is more inspiring to reflect that Castruccio Castracane must certainly have heard Mass here; that he buried Guarnerio, his infant son,[1] in San Francesco hard by, and that he built the fine *Fortezza*, which the enterprising may reach by half an hour's walk from the walls. For the rest, I saw Sarzana in a blare of sun and white dust; and having eaten reasonably well at the Albergo di Londra, went my way into the highlands. For I had seen Fosdinovo, dim in heat, upon the exact top of a mountain, and was determined to go its way to Pistoja, a crow's line over the Garfagnana, whose lords were the Malaspina, until Castruccio made himself lord over them.

Fosdinovo.

Over a spiral road which, at one point, may be 2000 feet above the sea, this little walled town, with its huge castle filling one whole angle of the plateau, hangs like a pinnacle of the rock upon which it stands. You must go about it and about some three times or four, and have the denizens' eyes upon you through the whole of your painful progress, and

[1] Herr Baedeker impulsively says that Castruccio himself was buried in San Francesco of Sarzana. He was buried in San Francesco of Lucca. The Sarzana tomb has the effigy of a *bimbo* upon it, and a rhymed inscription which begins,

Principis est natus Guarnerius immaculatus.

This settles it.

see the denizens' elbows firm upon the walls. I will not say that from here, better than anywhere else in Tuscany, you can gauge the difficulties of bygone besiegers, because there are five score hill-villages as good. But Fosdinovo is singularly complete; its walls are perfect, its castle at least body-perfect, its gates remain, and there is no more of a road in now than there was when Castruccio entered a conqueror and sent the Malaspina in chains down to Lucca. However, they had it again the moment he was dead; and, in his absence, it is easily seen that they had, and they have, the place under their thumbs. There was no entry into the Garfagnana from Spezzia save this; and there was no entry here unless the Malaspina chose. From the keep of the castle you have a fine view; the whole delta of the Magra, Spezzia and Porto Venere, like two cusps of a horn, the site of vanished Luni; to the north Carrara, Tendola, a score of other upland strongholds. A great fief for the Malaspina, who were a Lombard race, I believe, allied with Visconti and Della Scala. Moroello, Franceschino, Corradino—here are the names of three of them, brothers, who nominated Dante their proctor to make a peace for them with the stark old Bishop of Luni. On this account, or another, the great man has nothing but praise for them. He meets

Corrado, you will remember, in the Eighth Purgatory, and gives him a brave panegyric.

The castle—very much like other castles, of course—is a roomy stronghold, with all its courts, galleries, guard-rooms, battlements, and grass moats intact, so far as can be seen. The present Marquis has repaired it with a good deal of judgment, and has managed to secure comfort for himself without giving discomfort to the instructed traveller. I mean that he has been content to be without artificial light, hot-water apparatus, dinner-lifts, and the like; he has regarded a mediæval castle as such, and residence in it as a fact appealing almost wholly to sentiment. I don't admire the frescoes which record the honours of his ancestry, and could have wished that he had left the walls as they were, with the blushes of older and better stuff upon them. But his tapestries are magnificent. The village is a melancholy labyrinth of passages, caverns, rat-holes, dog-holes. A chance sight of an interior through some close entry or another went near to sicken me. Yet here, for reasons which cannot be guessed—except that they are too poor to live anywhere else—herd the people of the Marquis, *sua gente*, as he would say; and what they live upon in this sharp air, upon this bald peak of rock, only God and the Marquis know, and

possibly only God cares. But I suppose He is vowed not to interfere.

APPENDIX

CASTRUCCIO IN THE LUNIGIANA

Castruccio first interfered in the affairs of the Lunigiana in 1317, when he definitely broke with his first patron, Uguccione della Faggiuola. In that year Uguccione, with the help of Can Grande of Verona, made a sudden descent into Tuscany, pushing direct for Pisa. Here was Castruccio's chance. He made a league with Count Gaddo and the popular party in Pisa, and, while Gaddo manned the city walls, marched into the hills against another ally of Uguccione's, the Marquis Spinetta Malaspina. Villani says shortly that he took from him Fosdinovo, "a very strong castle," and Veruca and Buosi, "and made a desert of all his lands." Spinetta took refuge—as the fashion seems to have been—with Messer Cane della Scala, in Verona.

In Verona he must have lurked until 1321. By that time Castruccio was deep in war with Florence on his eastern, and Genoa on his northern march. Malaspina chose his moment—when the Florentines were in the Lucchese, actually investing Montevettolino—entered the Lunigiana from the Modena road, and got back some castles (not, I think, Fosdinovo). Castruccio, whose rapidity never failed to astound the Florentines, got levies from Lombardy, from Pisa, and Arezzo, raised the siege of Montevettolino, and drove his enemies back into Monte Albano. On the night of the 7th June he came up with them, but they declined battle and decamped in the dark, leaving all their fires alight. Castruccio pursued, took Fucecchio,[1] Santa Croce, Castelfranco, Montopoli, Vinci,

[1] But he lost it again. He was never able to hold Fucecchio.

Cerreto, wasted the country, and went home to Lucca. He was in no sort of hurry for Malaspina, nor had any need to be, for all fell out as he had calculated. The Florentines recalled their men from the Lunigiana; the Marquis must fight his own battles. But he did not, or could not. Castruccio went up in the autumn (September 1321), and all was his again; and again Cane of Verona received the Marquis.

HOUSE OF ROMOLA, FLORENCE.

CHAPTER V

THE GARFAGNANA—ROSARO, LIMA, SERCHIO, FIVIZZANO TO PISTOJA

To Fivizzano.

The Lunigiana implies that western slope of the Apuan Alps between Monte Sagro, Monte Pisanino, the Cuccù Pass, and the sea. Luni lies on the shore, buried deep in sand. Then the Garfagnana begins—Fivizzano is the gate—and runs north-east as far as Monte Cimone, and south-east to San Marcello. There one enters the Pistojese. It is a strange thing that all the living poetry of Tuscany is massed upon these ridges and those of the Mugello, the country whereby the Apennines tend to the Adriatic. It is by a pleasant upland landscape of chestnut woods (climbing to the snows), olive gardens, pergolas of vines, that you are embraced when you are beyond reach of Fosdinovo and all those stony holds; having topped the Cuccù and left a flint-strewn road to Massa Carrara on your right hand, you must

descend sharply and ascend again to gain Fivizzano. There are rivers to coast and to cross, small streams mostly, but one considerable—the Rosaro, to wit, a torrent of pretence, upon which Soliera stands well—which look like holding trout, and in April, no doubt, do hold them. But when

CASTELNUOVO DI GARFAGNANA.

I was there it was May; the flood-water was all gone, and with it, I suspect, the fishes. I did not wet a fly.

I was interested to see the Garfagnanesi, for reasons which I have described in the last paragraph. They are handsome, particularly the lads and maids—brown, shy-eyed girls, and thin boys

who grow up to be keen, graceful striplings. They are of a sort who, when they are old, are beyond measure hideous and pitiful. I saw one such, a crone chattering madly to herself, half-naked, by a ditch; a withered, scald-headed, shrunken atomy she was, who shook a chopping finger at me, gibbering as I passed. And it was grim thinking that those rosebuds and slips of beauty whom I had seen in glades of the woodland must needs turn into such. They are like their own country: in the morning it is green and groweth up; but the summer is over before May is done, and the rest is as bleached and bald as an old skull afield. Than their spring nothing can be more gracious, fuller of freshness, hope, and promise. These are they, then, who sing like nightingales when love dawns for them, who lisp, indeed, in numbers. A hundred times upon this one day's journey did I see Beppino in the fields—him who, even now, as he broods, leaning on his staff, may be singing of his beloved,

> L' acqua del mar ti mantien fresca e bella
> Come la rosa in sulla verde spina;
> Come la rosa in sulla verde rama,
> Giovine bella, ti vorrei per dama!

And Maddalena also I saw—with a copper cruse upon her proud young head—her who, as she goes swaying up the hill-path, is chanting to herself,

Mamma, se non mi date il mio Beppino,
Vo' andar pel mondo, e mai più vo' tornare.

This sempiternal couple, who make love songs about each other! at Tendola I saw them, at Soliera, Ceserano, Fivizzano. For—and I repeat it—here in the Garfagnana, and right across the

CASTELNUOVO DI GARFAGNANA.

Apennines to Pistoja, and thence into the Mugello, all young people are poets when they love, and at no other time at all. And if it is objected to me that all young people of every age and clime are poets too, I reply that these Apennine children are explicitly poets, with a severe technique, a complicated prosody, an expressiveness

of manner, a style which Petrarch, remarkable lover, could not better. What poets they are, and how they are and have been (Dante apart) the only true poets of Tuscany, I intend to declare.[1] Here I do but record as a fact—and there is none more interesting to be recovered in all the country—what I shall make good in the proper time. And in these leafy places I saw them walking, keeping sheep and pigs, climbing after their goats. Small wonder that, with them for my angling, I let the trout go by. In the Garfagnana you may go fishing for poets.

Fivizzano.

A friendly little hill-town is Fivizzano, utterly solitary upon a spur of rock, surrounded by the live green of a particularly beautiful valley. Neither for quire nor for cloister is it anyways famous, nor for castle of the Malaspina, nor palace of the people. Men have been born and have died here since the days of the Samnites without attaining to a monument in Santa Croce. I except Giovanni Fantoni—"the Italian Horace"—whose name in poesy was Labindo. He was of the society of the Arcadians, and if marble nymphs do not droop somewhere over a slab inscribed with his name, there is little in such titles as these. I have seen none of his works and wonder if they be extant—Fantoni,

[1] In the last chapter of this book.

the Italian Horace, the Labindo of the Arcadians! There is no more to report of Fivizzano but the memory of this poet, and the truth—which is that it has a great and good inn, Albergo della Posta, kept by a diligent and hospitable man; and kept by him alone, for I saw neither man-servant nor maid-servant in the house, and it is certain that,

BAGNI DI LUCCA.

as he served up the dinner, so he had also cooked it. He made the bed, he cleaned the boots, he answered the bell, he made out the bill, and went across the road to the post-office to change a 25 *lira* note. And throughout these incessant activities he was able to maintain a cheerful conversation. God bless the man, he gave me a *salone* and a bedroom *en suite* worthy of a prince's person—and by a prince's person

veritably enjoyed. A marble tablet over the wash-hand-stand records that the Magnificence of Leopold II., Grand Duke of Tuscany, repaired to my bed, below the barrel-roof of my bed-chamber, after having paced the long, tiled floor of my *salone*, while the Fivizzanesi treated him to music from the painted gallery. Here is the tablet, as nearly as I can remember it:—

Upon The Walls
of
This Apartment
in which
The Magnificence of Leopold II.
Grand Duke of Tuscany
DEIGNED TO REPOSE
For Two Nights
The Brothers Fossati of Fivizzano
In Order that Their Posterity
May Make Themselves Worthy
Of a House
Ennobled by the Presence of so Splendid a Guest
Q. M. P. F.

There is very little trace of history—I mean battle-and-murder history—to be seen. The walls, built by the Malaspina, battered by Castruccio, and strengthened by Cosimo Primo, remain; these and the gates. The fountain in the midst of the Piazza, where women come and go all day long to replenish their copper pots, was erected at the costs of Cosimo III.; the

collegiate church carries his pills escutcheoned over the portal. Within is little but whitewash and poor altars. Homely pursuits, primeval habits—early hours, a little gossip, sleep at noon, water-drawing, wood-hewing; love, for the young; a little shrewd comment for the old; a masterful Proposto who knows everybody's business and how it ought to be done; a portly hero of the emigrant ship, home from the Transvaal, with English ways and a pocketful of money—here are the day's, the week's, the year's round at Fivizzano.

The Apuans and the Apennines.

The little place is, as I say, the gate of the Garfagnana, which opens upon you from the Carpinelli Pass. From this height you look down upon the valley of the Upper Serchio (Lucca's river), with the Apuans behind you and the Apennines before. But to reach Piazza al Serchio you must work painfully about the sides of Monte Pisanino, a giant with a presence like the Jungfrau's upon him, and what looks uncommonly like a snowfield upon a neighbour height over against him. To do that your first valley of ascent is that of the Rosaro. The *col* of the Carpinelli is at the head of this burn, itself being some 2500 feet. Here you get the character of the Apuans—very different from their colleagues over the valley—genuine

Alps, with a fretty edge as sharp as a cross-saw's, with crevasses and aboriginal cascades of snow, and no vegetation worth the name after a certain level. But below that level they are extremely lovely. I saw chestnut woods as golden as heights in fairyland, stretching glades of oak and heath, than which nothing could lure one more sweetly to stray. Such things there are at walking distance—and above them, grim and isolated, freezing in the flawless blue, are crags and pinnacles which to scale may mean lonely death.

Then, so soon as you are round Monte Pisanino, and have the source of the Serchio, or rather its junction with another torrent, below your feet, you get the Apennines in fair view and can contrast the two systems. Certainly the scenery becomes softer, the peaks no longer gloom, or I rave. They are clothed with verdure from base to point, some with pine, some with scrub, some even with chestnut. The fields are all pink and yellow; when I was there the acacias, which I had seen dropping their blossoms down on the sea-level, were just breaking into flower. There was a verdant, sunny, Swiss aspect over all; out of the live air one expected momently to hear the musical call of a cowherd, the tinkle of goats' bells. Need I remind the reader that it is the country of such things, a country of shep-

FIVIZZANO.

herds and shepherdesses who, in the green and shady intervals of their pastoral cares, have leisure to make love and verses? Shall I tell him again that here Poesy still walks handfasted between lad and lass? Whether I bore him or not, he has it for what it is worth; and I will add this, that the beauty of the adolescent Garfagnanesi—girls, boys, and heifers—is not to be described. It lieth not in feature or form, it is not all a matter of hue and contour. There is in it a momentary something, a something arch and starting at once, something which peers like a mouse and invites like a cat; a softness, a colum-bine allure—I begin to coin adjectives—it seems to reside in quick and graceful motions, in kind, flying glances: how the deuce is one to put it, when it is as fleet as a summer cloud?

After circuitous descents, many and perilous, you find Piazza al Serchio to be a parapeted amphitheatre with a great, curved bridge and a mill midway. Leaning here to rest, you can see that fine river rush green and foaming out of the rocks. Fazio's phrase would recur to the mind did not Dante provide a better—

Piazza al Serchio, Castelnuovo.

> Rimbomba là sovra San Benedetto
> Dell' alpe, per cadere ad una scesa,
> Ove dovria per mille esser ricetto

he says of the Montone in the Mugello. *Rimbomba là!* Thus comes the Serchio with a thunderous uproar.

From this point—Piazza al Serchio—you sweep down and down, always following Serchio's leaping motions. Snugly upon the river, round a half-moon which it makes for itself, a nest in the bosom of green hills, lies Castelnuovo di Garfagnana, a fair and ample, bridged town, where Ariosto is said to have stayed as Commissary-General for Este of Ferrara, his master.[1] You can see his house—half a fortress, half a decent official residence—with a little piazza of its own, and a look-out tower commanding the road which winds northward into the hills. Other monuments there may be, but I could see none.

The Revenant.

At the inn, where I was waited upon by a woman more beautiful than any who can be now ministering to Mahomet—the young wife of my young host—I found a portly inhabitant of the place, smoking a cigar out of one corner of his mouth, who had a look in his eyes—quick and highly intelligent—very different from his fellows'. I was not at all

[1] The Castelnoveschi gave themselves over to the Este family in the fifteenth century, sickened of the chopping of nations in the Val d' Arno. They had been serfs in their time of Pisa, Florence, Lucca, and craved a settled tyranny. The Este held Castelnuovo until the French invasion. The Medici never had it.

surprised when he asked me in fluent American if I was going around much. He talked Tuscan, at pleasure, with an American intonation, not at all agreeable; but when he turned to the language of his later adoption there was no tinge of latinity about it. A pleasant, friendly, most satisfied man,

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he was pleased with everything he had done in life; glad that he had gone out to Harrisburgh in Pennsylvania and stayed there for fourteen years, "making money and getting drunk"—for he confessed to both pursuits; again he was glad that he had left it and returned to what he owned to be an existence rather than a career. It was

quiet, but he had got to like it; there was no whisky, and he was glad of it. Two thousand dollars, he supposed, would buy up Castelnuovo, cotton mills and all; well, he hadn't bought it yet. Instead, he was there in his shirt-sleeves, smoking Tuscan cigars, happy and not drunken. I should have liked to tell him—but did not—how much I thought he had taken the wiser part. Harrisburgh might be good, and whisky; but the green uplands of the Garfagnana must needs be better, and a crack with a friend in the piazza, and a flask of Vernace cooled with a little spring water. I did hint at their excellence, even at their superiority. "I guess you are right," says he, "I find them better." Tuscan still, at the heart, you see, this large, cocksure, genial man; but also a rare creature—a Tuscan who knew himself to be so, having been taught the stern discipline of Harrisburgh, and much whisky.

Trout, shepherds, and running water.

Leaving this quiet town you must follow the Serchio once more on its way to the plains and osiers of Lucca. When I went down it had so much of the air of a Norwegian salmon river that I persuaded myself it held salmon, or, at any rate, trout,[1] and fished it carefully for two runs and one long pool.

[1] And so it does—or did—for I ate some at Castelnuovo, fresh and fresh.

There may have been snow in the water, or thunder in the air; or I was inexpert, or the fish were not taking; or there were none. I state the facts, that I rose no fish, nor saw any rise. Flies a plenty were upon the water; it was insufferably hot. The only breeze came in steaming gusts, as you get it from an engine-room at sea; it was blowing scirocco, as they say. Otherwise it was good for me to be there, amid thymy scents, scents of acacia and sweet briar, singing of nightingales on the wooded heights above me, tinkling of *grilli*, and the tumbling, surging noises of Serchio hastening to well-wooded Lucca.

A lovely glen, indeed, is this of the Serchio, finely clad on both sides with oak and chestnut, and as I saw it this May vividly yellow with broom. On the left bank, where the river broadens and swells, the woods are on a ridge, betwixt which and the mountains lies another plain. Upon that ridge Barga stands, a severe, little serried town of grey and madder. There also stand Coreglia, Fosciandora, Albiano, and Pieve Fosciana, its smaller counterparts. As to your course from this point, you run down Serchio to Borgo a Mozzano in order to cross; you go up stream on the further bank for a mile or more; you then leave the Serchio for the

NEAR SAN MARCELLO.

Lima, and so you reach Bagni di Lucca. It is a shady road for the main part, great in traffic in the early summer. At every bend of the tree-covered way you meet shepherds with their flocks, homing, poor dusty souls, to their mountains from the Maremma—sheep and one pig, goats and one sheep, steers and one goat; that is the way with them. They have been down in those broad solitudes all the winter, grazing, but now are coming home. Many a Beppino of the Garfagnana has been yearning for his Nannetta in heartful verses; many a Nannetta at home is standing among the ridged olives watching the road, and singing her soul out among the twinkling grey leaves.

> Ho trapiantato un giglio alla marina,
> L' ho trapiantato nell' Orbetellana,

she has been crying all the winter: but now he is coming back:

> E vedo, e vedo, e non vedo chi voglio,
> Vedo le foglie di lontan tremare,
> E vedo lo mio amore in su quel poggio.

Here's poetry, if I know it. And I met the poets by scores—tall, bony, sombre-eyed young men, brown as walnuts, extraordinarily gentle, and to me, a stranger and a journeyman, extra-ordinarily courteous. Their hats went off to

my sublimity: God forgive me for obtaining it. Is any man in the world worthy a poet's salute? I remember one pretty group, a family party. First came countless goats, stepping daintily (as if to save the dust), with nodding heads and blinking ears all in a harmony; there was a mule with panniers, in one of which a new-born kid,

PONTE DEL DIAVOLO, BAGNI DI LUCCA.

barely an hour old, still dazed and listless before the world; and then the family. A tall and bearded *Babbo*, many children hanging to his coat, and a handsome mother leading the second mule. Upon him were the bedding, pots, pannikins, and gridirons of the household, and atop of all, face downwards, thrown across like sacks and strapped into safety, two yellow-haired babies in deep sleep. The father pointed them out to

me as he passed, but I had already seen their brown legs, and rosy cheeks turned sideways. Yet he pointed them out. "Così," he said, "così si va adagio," and laid his hand on one little swooning shoulder. Thus he had not gone himself, good man. Here was a picture for George Morland, or a better than he.

Lima.

The Baths of Lucca has the leafy amenity, the watered roads, the retired villas, obliging tradesmen (very brisk with their go-carts), geraniumed gardens, and trim terrace-walks of, let us say, Clapham Park. It cannot escape, however, and does not escape the smug obtuseness of that sanctuary; in fact, it is not the thing for which one travels the mountains of Tuscany. I observed in it a boulevard dedicated—I know not why—to the person and conversation of Mr. Marion Crawford. This is the fact: *Viale Marion Crawford.* I daresay that he stopped there, and am sure that he was comfortable; but personally I was glad to find out that the sooner you leave the Bagni the sooner you are in the mountains again, and can begin to climb in between them. You have Battifolle in front of you, a towering green cone of 6000 feet. The Lima roars and tumbles about two sides of this monster, and about him go you—to enter the most magnificent gorge

anywhere north of Rome. Very narrow it is, and very deep under the crags: there are some

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five or six miles of it, but the road is excellent. When Castruccio marched this way, as march he

did, in 1323, to abase the Pistojesi and trample their flag in the dust, it must have been as jeopardous an enterprise as any recorded in the history books. The place is a sort of Khyber, like the Roncesvalles of fancy, not of fact—

> Halt sunt li pui e tenebrus e grant.

It is a Passage Perilous of chivalry, a place for Amadis or Tyrant the White—so high, so quiet (but for the sighing of the river), so beset with ambushes. But, in his own way, and with the stuff he had, Castruccio was the Hannibal, the Napoleon of his day.

The Pistojese, San Marcello.

Out of this deep and dangerous place you emerge into a new countryside. You leave the Garfagnana for the Pistojese, a very bright green, gay and elfin, but still pastoral country; a smiling, tender landscape of pale tints, but still a country of young poets and true religion. The grass is all in flower, the scythes are busy swishing it down, the *cicale* are jingling all their little bells; from ridge and ridge, from Popiglio, Piteglio, Campiglio, Mammiano, and other white *paesi*, you hear the church-towers call the hour to each other; at every quarter mile you see a shrine to Madonna, and never one without its hedgeflower nosegay in a tumbler. And so you cross a bridge called Pontepetri and

come to San Marcello, more prosperous because more accessible than most of the hill-towns—a cream and white, well-kept village with an air of Pistoja in its broad-eaved, green-shuttered streets, its chattering *trattorie*, and substantial inns. It has a hideous church—the fine old belfry left—and celebrates by the lapidary art the greatness of a Duke Ferruccio.[1] It has handsome, free-looking women, lovely children; and it is disposed for the summering of fatigued Florentine English—with *pensions*, Anglican services (of a high order), chemists, biscuit-bakers, photograph-shops, and touts of all sorts; and there's an end of the matter. Its inn would be better if it were more racial; but against "home comforts" and amateur photography the God of Nature fights in vain.

It is upon the edge of that great old road from Modena to Pistoja, of which something has been said already, and more remains to be said.

[1] This was, in fact, Francesco Ferrucci of Florence, a captain under Pope Clement VII., the particular Medici who, in 1530, raised the chances of his house to regain the sovereignty. Ferrucci, made Commissary-General, marched an army from Pisa to Pistoja by the Val di Lima, burning as he went. It is to be feared San Marcello had no reason to bless him.

CHAPTER VI

PISTOJA TO FLORENCE—THE PLAIN

Auroral thoughts.

PISTOJA, being one of the gates of Tuscany, should be seen at the beginning, never at the end of your errantry. I have been lucky in this, that not only have I seen it first, but that I have always seen it in early morning light, saluting the dawn, as I was doing.[1]

I saw it from Cireglio, after the long and painful traverse of the hills from Modena; I saw all the Val d' Arno lie below me like a carpet, with Pistoja for a rose upon the intricate pattern —a blot of pink and purple in the vague blue-green field. Little as I knew of it then—indeed,

[1] From San Marcello to Pontepetri is your way, a broad, flat road between parks and orchards of green. It is at Pontepetri—where there is a bridge over the Reno—that you turn up to the right, and climb to Piastre, where the hills are bald and scabby, and more like the downs about Florence. Anon you descend and come to Cireglio, and before you, then, see a bluff; and beyond that, empty air. That is the magic Land's End—over in that misty space is all that you have journeyed out to see.

I knew nothing more of it than that pistols were called by its name—I could not fail to see it as

THE PULPIT, PRATO.

the threshold of the enchanted land to which I was wandering, a pilgrim to its holy places. Through Pistoja, Florence was mine, Pisa, Siena,

Volterra, sea-washed Orbetello. The Arno, whose every stone Dante knew, lay in the midst of that brocaded plain, and into Arno flowed those rivers of lovely names—slow Elsa, white-beached Sieve, Era and Ema, Evola and Pesa, names of very music.[1] I need not say that I was very young; it is necessary to be that if you are to see Italy aright. Nor is it possible for me to describe with what drum-music of the heart I looked upon the vivid, sunlit glory to which I made my descent. Not only did it surpass promise, it out-topped the expectation, even the suspicion, of its glory. The incomparable freshness of every hue—the daring of a race of men who should wash their house-fronts orange or rose, who should paint them white and keep them at that bridal point—the effrontery and success of their building, whose farmhouses were like boxes, and yet picturesque; whose churches like barns, and yet venerable. Heavens! if I was ragged, rather hungry, a truant, without pence—what did

[1] Actually, if there is no mist in the valley, you see Pistoja, and the course of the Ombrone, and the road to Signa. Monte Morello hides up Florence on your east, Monte Albano the Arno and San Miniato de' Tedeschi on your west. The road down from Cireglio winds, but is a good one, and Cireglio itself has a fine old church and long, straying street. You discover that the Val d' Arno is not so wide as that of the Rhone, nor near so fruitful, nor so outlined with sharp rocks. Nor are its roads by any means shady as those of that pleasant valley.

You will see a ragged butt of Montemurlo still standing on the mountain edge. Castruccio had that built to torment the Pistojesi.

these things weigh? Here was I, the bridegroom, before the unveiled bride.

The nearing prospect of the little old city, dipped in green and gold—a dome of dusky red, a grey tower or so, weather-bitten walls, something bright and clean, some prosperous air, touched and took prisoner my confidence. I became an ingenuous youth, and rightly so, before such engaging manners. Pistoja and I, on that mild spring morning, seemed to be singing a duet. As I came on I overtook country folk going my way, women on donkeys, plaiting straws as they went, children running, the men walking together and apart, full of the most exuberant talk you ever heard; bullock-carts, laden mules, and such like. There was a steady stream of people setting towards Pistoja, some of whom had come far by the looks of them; mountaineers some, with swathed legs and staves in their hands; priests with vivid green umbrellas; farmers in gigs much too small for their persons. I suppose the road is the greatest leveller next to death; the dust and sweat had coloured us all alike, and I had no more difficulty at the *dazio* than the natives. Not that I had less. The customs officers opened my bundle and handled one or two of my books. I let myself be floated in by the

Procession to Pistoja.

pressure of the crowd; together we all swam like a bore-of-the-tide up the long street.

The last of the Cancellieri.

I found myself jostling with a sharp-faced, bristle-bearded countryman, carrying tools and a wickered flask of wine over his shoulder, and fell into some talk with him.

"Why are we all in such a stew to get to Pistoja?" I asked him, after passing the time of day.

He looked at me keenly. I soon found out that it took very little to excite a Tuscan's curiosity. "Where can you be from, who know not that?" he returned at once. "It is San Atto we are going to visit."

"Ah! San Atto the Bishop. They expose his relics?"

"That," he said, "is the state of the case. Every year on this day we go to visit San Atto."

I admired the devotion, and proposed to share it. "*Già, già,*" says he. "It is a very good custom."

"In my country," I said, "such reverence as this is done by stealth, if done at all. We do not even know certainly the whereabouts of some of our greatest saints."

My companion's eyes twinkled; he pondered

the remark, then murmured some polite regrets. He thought it curious, he said, that so practical a nation as the English should neglect any obvious source of profit.

"It is because my countrymen have become absorbed in material profit," said I, "that they

THE MARKET, PISTOJA.

distrust any inward promptings. They affect to despise ceremony; really, they fear it. They will doff their hats to the Queen: 'There!' they say, 'there's prosperity for you!' But if you were to put up a figure of the Queen of heaven in a blue cloak and crown of stars they would show their independence by marching past her, chins

in the air, and hats jammed down to the ears. They are congees and deference to a living bishop—you should see them at their shop-doors when my lord drives up in his carriage; but a dead bishop, be he as holy as Grosseteste of Lincoln, as puissant in war as Hugh of Durham,

PISTOJA.

they consider to be no more than a spadeful of dust."

He was greatly interested, he was amazed. "This," he said, "is the wildest folly. How can a Queen upon earth help you so far as our Lady in heaven? This is a very short-sighted business. Your nation will never prosper on those terms."

"Yours is the opinion of a few of us," I replied. "We even go so far as to say that a newspaper that supports itself by tickling the baser parts of base people had better do it

ENTRANCE TO MARKET, PISTOJA.

with the end of a rope and be through with it. But your San Atto, I fear, would come into conflict with our police. They would say, 'This prelate is dead and has been buried, yet here he is again. Into the ground with him, or into the British Museum.' You would call this madness."

"Why," says my friend, "I should. As I understand it, there is a plain bargain. We run to San Atto with our difficulties, who, as having been Bishop of Pistoja, knows all the circumstances to a tick. My own, now, is a scapegrace son, who has set up for a footpad under Vallombrosa, and be hanged to him. Very well. I take my case to San Atto. He says, 'Two candles at my altar before I look into it.' That is fair enough. But you see the lie of the thing."

I had indeed never seen it more clearly. I asked him if he was a Tuscan. He shrugged his shoulder. "Who knows what I may be, sir?" said he. "I am by birth, like my father before me, a Vajanese. We don't reckon ourselves to be of any nation but that. The Marquess[1] is my master, and he's no Tuscan, but a Pistolese."

"He may be a Tuscan for all that," I said; to which he assented readily.

"Well," he continued, after a pause, "he's a great lord, and should have the best of everything while it lasts. One is taken and another is left. Now my own name, let me tell you, was good for something once upon a time."

I begged him to tell it me. "My name of origin," he replied, "is Cancellieri. In fact Gino

[1] Panciatichi.

Cancellieri is the whole of it; but they call me Maso's Gino in the ordinary way, and as often as not Il Bazza, because of this great chin of mine."

It was now my turn to be interested, not in his chin, which was nothing out of the common

PALACE OF PODESTÀ, PISTOJA.

run, but in his name. This unshaven hedger bore the arms which Pistoja had assumed in his right—the chequer-board arms, the White and the Black. In this man's blood had been brewed that infernal drink which drove Florence mad and Corso Donati to a dog's death.[1] All this I

[1] See Appendix to this chapter.

told him. "Your forefather, my dear sir," I ended, "was tyrant of Pistoja."

The last of the Cancellieri took this at first with great phlegm.

"He may have been, for all I know," he said; "but my own father was a road-mender, and broke stones betwixt Piastre and Cireglio. He was famous for it. You have been walking on his metal this morning, I doubt, and permit me to say there is no better. Tyrant of Pistoja, was he? Well, there's a trade for a man!" The humour of it now tickling him, he laughed gaily.

I said that I considered it a less reputable trade than road-mending; but Cancellieri would have his laugh out now that he had caught it.

"Why, it may be so," he allowed. "I don't care to dispute it. But what gravels me is the justice of it. My grandfather, as you may say, walked soft-foot upon the sweat of the Pistolesi, and now here are the Pistolesi doing the same by my father. Well, well, that's as good as a comedy any day."

"The thought consoles you?" I asked. He raised an eyebrow; it is thus the Tuscans usually shrug.

"I say that it tickles me," he answered. "You may not relish justice for a full meal, but you may learn to be diverted by it as a snack.

That is my case, signorino. To meet again, sir; your servant." He took off his woollen cap as he made this little speech, and I saw him engage a friend in lively conversation.

I was now in the centre of a hive of people, the most delightful and interesting I had ever

BAPTISTRY, PISTOJA.

seen. Their background was the Cathedral Square of Pistoja, where all ages of history stand together in a common suit of dust. The octagonal baptistry, a fine building of Romanesque design, built in alternate courses of green and yellow marble; the colonnaded front of a huge church, the massive belfry,

The market-place.

Gothic palaces of Commune and Podestà—here was evidence enough of a great past. Familiarly with all this were modern stucco houses, pink and yellow, creamy or green; a tavern with its bush of myrtle; barbers' shops with striped poles and dangling basins: in the midst the sheds, hovels, and booths of traffickers from outside, come to trade in the market. Early as the hour was, and it could hardly have gone six o'clock, the square was thronged with buyers and sellers; but through the press two steady streams set in and out of the church, where, no doubt, San Atto lay in state, open to make bargains.

San Atto.

I saw him, a wizened, little brown atomy of a man in cope and mitre, lying on his side in a glass-fronted silver shrine. The masses were incessant: no sooner was one over than the next celebrant and his boy were on the steps. Completely indifferent to these, their beginnings, climaxes, or accomplishment, regarding them apparently as works of nature (like the sequence of seasons, precessions of equinox, etc.), the worshippers pursued their private devotion. I saw the last of the Cancellieri come in to effect his bargain; he was exceedingly methodical. It was as if he had measured off in his mind the due length of service, and had begun to pay out. His lips were moving as he approached with his

two tapers alight. As he chose a place for them, as he stuck them in among the others which, in various stages of decay, were flickering or flaring upon the candelabrum, his prayers went on. His eyes wandered about and about; he surveyed critically all the company, but he never stopped his prayers. They ceased not as he pushed and elbowed for a place, but the pace quickened perceptibly when his eyes fell upon the vested mummy behind the glass. They ran on with the regularity of a steam-engine's throbs; they reached their appointed end—his fingers pattered over his brow and breast—he stooped his head—lower—lower—kissed the pavement. He rose and turned away, his lips locked up; and before he was out of the chapel he had met a praying friend. He talked the time of day, but I saw that the friend, though he listened, went on praying. I hope his son was turned from evil courses on the Vallombrosa road, but if I had been San Atto I should have hardened my heart.

The bargain with Pistoja.

Such humours apart, the pleasures to be got out of Pistoja are very much like the benefits you may coax from San Atto. You must make your bargain with the place. If you love the very words "Middle Age"; if they conjure up to your mind glowing old folios of black letter with gilt and florid

initials; crimson and green and blue pages in which slim ladies with spiked head-dresses walk amid sparse flowers and trees like bouquets, or where men-at-arms attack walled cities no bigger than themselves, or long-legged youths with tight waists and frizzed hair kiss girls under apple trees; or a king is on a dais with gold lilies for his background, minstrels on their knees before him, lovers in the gallery;—if, with all such dainty circumstance, you can be pleased and not offended with the shrewd surmise of savagery and heathenism only too ready to go naked, then you will do well in Pistoja. It has the real mediæval air. It is elaborately built, by a people to whom beauty of detail was well worth the labour and cost. It has been battered by rams, blackened by fire, fretted by weather, speckled all over with men's blood. It is rude, it is hale. Things quietly beautiful are to be found in byways, flowering unseen, but by no means considering their sweetness wasted, as the poet foolishly imagined. It was like the eighteenth century, the public age, to think you were unhappy if you were not admired. The frieze of the Hospital—*Spedale del Ceppo*—is not only sweet in intention, it is fragrant as a cowslip mead, though I daresay it is very bad sculpture. The *Visitation* in San Giovanni,

however, is one of the best Della Robbias in Italy—an urgent, tender, momentary thing. In San Francesco al Prato—a wreck of a church—there are remains of the frescoes which once covered it from floor to ceiling and from end to end. A vast picture Bible is there, with all

PRATO.

the fabulous monsters—Behemoth and Leviathan spouting in the flood,—and all the semi-fabulous: bearded hermits milking stags, camels, pious pelicans, giraffes, prophets in caves, processions of kings, flights into Egypt, shepherds afield reading the message of the winter stars. You can see such things better at Pisa, in the Campo

Santo; but it is good to decipher them in this vast deserted church. And in another—San Pietro—it is pleasant to remember that every Bishop of Pistoja used here to espouse the abbess of the Benedictines. Once, at least, in the series of these mystical rites the issue was not mystical at all. One could imagine a tale for Boccaccio, I think, where, for love of a beautiful and high-born abbatissa, a certain *giovane*, called (let us say) Tebbaldo, took orders, became Bishop of Pistoja, celebrated his metetherial nuptials, and—but I shall leave the rest to Boccaccio.

These are nearly all the contributions of Pistoja to the bargain which I told you is to be made.[1] The attractions of the city, which are very real, lie perhaps neither in them nor in history, but rather in this, that the treacheries,

[1] Here is one more, which I borrow from Villani. Before the Pistolesi were under the Florentine yoke they had a great castle at Carmignano, a place tucked under Monte Albano, close to Poggio a Cajano, with a tower 700 braccia high, "and on the top two arms of marble, whose hands made the *fiche* at Florence." Deplorable sign! Worse—much worse—than our "long nose." Workmen in Florence, when you offered them their wages, used to shake their heads at the money, saying, "I can't see it; the *Rocca* of Carmignano is in front of me." So when Florence got hold of the place the Pistolesi "were made to do the pleasure of the Florentines, and dismantle the said *Rocca*." This story shows, among other things, how close to Florence the Pistolese *contado* ran. In fact, the little city owned the whole amphitheatre of mountains to the north and west. The eastern wing of it—Monte Calvana, Monte Morello—belonged to the Conti Alberti, who owned or were suzerains of Prato.

bloodthirsts, wicked lusts of the little den of thieves have all burnt themselves out, and that what is left is as clean and wholesome as poor brown San Atto, who lies, somewhat shrunken, in his jewelled cope within an altar of old silver,

PALACE, PISTOJA.

as ready as Pistoja herself to strike bargains with the faithful.

And so to Florence.

Of the two roads from here to Florence both are bad, but the Via Pratese is the worse, and by no means improved by a "light railway." It gives you Prato, however, a gay and spacious little city, with a Cathedral for which old Lassel's adjective "neat" will do

very well.[1] It is exactly that, and in design and scope not much more. But like all Tuscan churches of any standing it is enriched by delightful things. Here they are a lunette of Della Robbia stuff over the door, with a supreme and buxom Pratese girl doing duty for Madonna; Donatello's pulpit and its girdle of dancing children; the very girdle of the Virgin herself, "the same she comforted Saint Thomas" (to use Rawdon Crawley's useful locution); and Lippo Lippi's one successful fresco, in the choir. He has essayed in this the Ghirlandajo scheme of great dusky, arcaded interiors, light landscapes of plain and mountain seen through windows, sombre men in Florentine dresses—crimson, orange, and brown,—and one or two pretty women in pale blue moving about in the rich gloom. On one side it is Herodias' daughter, in another a maid-servant and a scullion kissing in a corner. Charmingly pretty; yet it is to be noted that but for this incident and group, you would not know by a study of Tuscan art that kissing was a habit of this people. Nor is it, in public, at least.

By the other road—the Via Florentina—which goes dead straight by Poggio a Cajano to Signa

[1] Perhaps the reader will remember that he said of Siena, "The Cathedral is a neat building."

over the sun-baked plain, you must travel under a fiercely white sky, over cushions of dust, through little brawling, fly-blown towns, for some six or eight miles.[1] This makes it considerably shorter than the other, and there are no metals to involve your wheels until you reach Campo Bisenzio. Your reward will be that you get the whole length of Monte Albano, and can see the castles upon it, one after another—including that Carignano which I mentioned in the note to a former page. Hereabouts also is a fine wood, and the Medici villa of Poggio a Cajano, which looks roomy, and is so—and contains a good academical kind of fresco by Pontormo.

And so to Florence by the gate of the railway station and Santa Maria Novella. Colourless, heat-ridden, fly-ridden, dust-laden country—or so it was when I drove in that way last May. White sky, grey foliage, drab dust, yellow houses. There's a palette for you! But it *is* to be seen as tenderly hued as an opal, as fresh and dewy as a garden at dawn; and the happier he who can see it so at all times.

[1] It is as nearly as possible twenty miles from gate to gate.

APPENDIX

THE CANCELLIERI FACTIONS

I DON'T know that the Cancellieri were ever actually tyrants of Pistoja, though by implication they and their works tyrannised over all the Val d' Arno until Castruccio, the Napoleon of those parts, made havoc of them with his rude besom. Just as the Buondelmonti and Uberti began the Guelf-Ghibelline strifes, so did these Cancellieri the Black and White. Here is an outline of the story, which (as will subsequently be seen) lacks the romantic touch of the other. In the year 1300 there was a party of young Cancellieri—some half-dozen of them—drinking in a tavern—

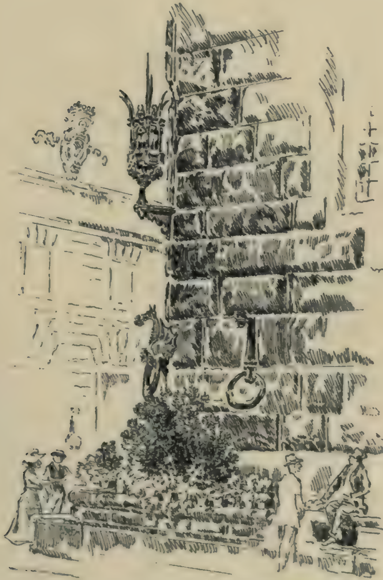
> Late, late at e'en, drinking the wine.

Half in joke, one of these lads fell to scuffling with another; half in drink, he struck and knocked him down. The two were separated, but the man assailed took it badly, and vowed he would get level before sunrise.

So he did, after the fashion of his nation. He lay in wait in the street outside his assailant's house, and when one of that family returned—which he did after a long day's journey, having had, observe, no more to do with the fray than the man in the moon—leapt upon him, struck him in the face with his dagger, and as he fell back against the wall, hacked at his right hand and cut it all-but off. The young ruffian got clear away before they took in his half-dead kinsman; but if there had been any doubt as to his identity, it is due to his family to say that they let there be none. His father and brothers, indeed, handed him over to the house of the injured man to do what they would with him. What they did was this: they dragged him out into the stables, held out his arm over the manger and cut off his hand. Then they slashed him in the

face in the same cheek as he had assailed, and turned him out of doors with these words: *Blood will stanch blood.*

That was the way of it. The great family was split in two. The White party clove to the side first injured in the wine shop; the Black party to that of the man who did the trivial wrong. To the Whites ran the Ghibellines, to the Black the Guelfs. All those miseries which had distracted Florence, Pisa, Lucca, Arezzo all the thirteenth century began again in the fourteenth. Of them I propose to be silent here, as elsewhere.



CORNER OF THE PALAZZO STROZZI.

CHAPTER VII

GODI, FIRENZE

> Godi, Firenze, poi che se' sì grande
> Che per mare e per terra batti l' ali,
> E per l' inferno il nome tuo si spande.
> 26 *Inf.*

My Palinode.

IF it would be hard to beat the scorn of the words, even the scorner himself could never have known the bitter truth he went on to predict. Dante wrote in exile—with fire and sword over Florence in his mind's eye. What he could not have known, but would have accepted grimly had he known, was that the very greatness of Florence was to be her ruin. If the town had been on a hill it might be now as beautiful as Siena, but had never been crown of Tuscany. If it had not been crown of Tuscany it need not have been in slavery for five hundred years. But these are idle *ifs.* Florence held the Medici and the Medici enslaved Florence. Out of those very strifes for which Dante suffered—strifes between privilege and profit for the most part—out of those very strifes the Medici sucked

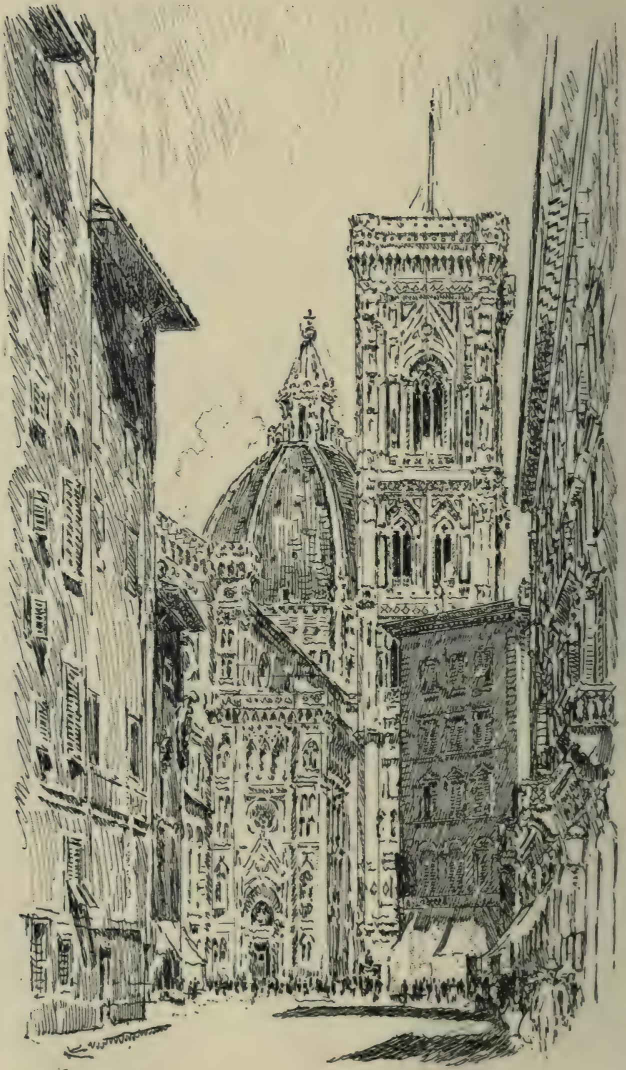
their meat; and out of those detriments to good fortune themselves grew the strength of the town with which they headed their empire. For being midway up the Arno, with Pisa at the sea-gate, Pisa must fall if Florence were to live. And Pisa fell. And being threatened by mountain passes to north and south, whereof the gates were Pistoja on the road to Milan and Siena on that of Rome, Siena and Pistoja must each go mourning if the Florentines were to be content. So did Pistoja mourn, and so at last Siena. Florence became the seat of empire; the Grand Dukes were crowned in the Duomo, and buried in San Lorenzo; but almost from the hour of attaining all this glory the Florentine staple began to languish. Pisa was a desert, and Florence no nearer the sea. Cosimo built the haven at Leghorn, and settled a town half Jews and half Greeks. Leghorn throve; but the corn, the wine, the oil, the wool, and, worst of all, the fine Tuscan florins, whose good usury was the real Florentine commodity, brought less and less profit home. When Monsieur de Brosses visited Florence in the days of the Grand Duke Leopold, he found the citizens giving evening parties and discussing *belles-lettres.* Politics were forbidden them, the Jesuits had charge of religion, they neither warred nor were warred upon. And so it has been ever

FLORENCE.

since, whether Austria, France, or Savoy were over-lord: Florence is dead, and year by year shows less of what made her live as more and more foreigners come to picnic upon the remains. And by *dead*, I mean dead at the heart; for a city may have lost all that made it once appear

FROM THE CASCINE, FLORENCE.

significant and separate, and yet live, and yet be itself, by distinction and direction of the living spirit. So is Siena, a little town without commerce, or art, or any temporal prosperity, living still—the city still of Saint Catherine, of the Tolomei and Salimbeni, of Pandolfo Petrucci and all his turbulent household; so is Paris alive,



THE CAMPANILE, FLORENCE.

From the Uffizi

hidden deep in a mountain of mortar, and stucco, and bad pictures. But Florence is very cold.

I am crying my palinode; for the years are not many[1] since I denied much of this. But the brickwork spreads apace. You cannot call Florence a mere handful now. The green vistas at street-ends, the peak of a mountain lonely in the light, the gleaming sun upon old convents far off, the tongue of a single cypress, or the sable cloud which marks a convocation of them—these are not the sights they were: you may walk from the Beccaria to the Mugnone, and hardly know that Fiesole still stands. From Rovezzano on the east to Il Pellegrino on the road to the Mugello; from Peretola on this side of Arno to Signa upon that, the brick and plaster fungus has spread. There are houses all the way to San Domenico, and the road to Ponte a Mensola has other than garden walls to hem it in. Within walls it is worse. The churches are museums, the palaces shops of bric-à-brac. Anything you see you can buy, most of what you buy you had better not to have bought. You will hear more English in the streets than Tuscan. The place, in fact, is cosmopolitised, neither *sui generis*, nor of the Tuscan, nor even of the Italian *genus*. It

[1] They are *ten*. See *Earthwork out of Tuscany*, you that are curious in such a little matter (third edition), p. 18.

OUTSIDE FLORENCE.

is in the case with Rome and Naples—but not with Milan and Venice.

PIAZZA SIGNORIA, FLORENCE.

Old stories, old books, old pictures—there are still these. Even if the stories have all been told, and the books are never read, and Mr.

Berenson denies the authenticity of most of the pictures—there they are for the quiet eye to peruse, and the quiet mind to garner. Add the

THE BARGELLO.

serene old churches: San Giovanni, incurably dignified—Santa Maria Novella golden as a nectarine—shabby, barren, sacred Santa Croce—and the towering rose-coloured Cathedral, most

godless and most superb in Tuscany; add a

VIA TORNABUONI.

tortuous street or two—Via Porta Rossa, Borgo SS. Apostoli, Borgo San Jacopo—to remind you

of a day when Florentines went upon their feet, and street warfare was a living art; add some dusty shrines, beautiful as flowers, and not yet destroyed because they have been forgotten; add a few green gardens, the flashing prism of the Arno, quick to change from metal-yellow to hot green, from blue to violet, from grey to the glitter of steel; add the acacias in flower, the irises in the villa gardens like a windy sea of mauve; add the morning hope, the evening calm (for the star that rises over Fiesole rose also for Dante and Beatrice), the peasant girls singing like thrushes at open windows, an honest man here and there, and a place where you can eat your breakfast and look at Orsammichele—and you see there are still cakes and ale in Florence, pippins and cheese to come.

Divinations of beauty here.

The city, as it now is, must be divined to have been beautiful, rather than confessed so. Too much has been done to it, too much crowded into narrow space, and too much allowed to spill over. When you begin the renewing of a Florence, with wires and poles for your telegrams, rails for your tramways, kerbed pavements for your foot passengers, and the hundred other make-shifts a man has been taught to need, you distort an old town in order to make a botched parody of a new one. The

At San Miniato, Florence.

narrow ways of Florence were intended for the

PALAZZO DELLA SIGNORIA, FLORENCE.

passage of the citizens, who were at home there, and received each other there with entertainment

of business or pleasure. In the open piazza they feasted, danced, made shows, sacred or profane; in the streets they traded, and walked as they traded. A train of mules might pick its way between, a horseman or two, a file of infantry. Room would be made for an ox-team now and then, for a saint under his canopy, or God in the pyx, or a dead man on his bier. This is the kind of traffic for which streets like the Corso, Borgo SS. Apostoli, Calzaioli, or Por Santa Maria were designed. The present effect is disenchanting and full of every discomfort of sound, sight, and sense. A very short walk discovers this: you get no effect, there is no illusion; rather, there are many, one upon the heels of another. Go from the Porta Croce through the Borgo as far as the Proconsolo. You seem to be in a town where every swarming alley, every little hole in the wall heaped with merchandise, speaks of ancientry. Glance, as you go, to the left down the Borgo Allegri. At the end of a long vista of blue shadow on which the light breaks unequally, like a line of white water, you will see in full sun the warm brown flank of a brick church. That is Santa Croce, and so Desiderio may have looked at it as he walked from Corbignano to his work. Turn up the Proconsolo, "translated" beyond hope, save for that

beaten old Bastile which they call the Bargello[1]; at the end of it you will have before you that

DOORWAY, PALAZZO VECCHIO.

rose-coloured mountain of marble which Arnolfo

[1] Even in 1754, Zocchi showed this place as it was and now is; and with a man being hanged by the thumbs on the wall!

planned, Giotto and Andrea Pisano contrived, and Brunelleschi crowned. Beside it stands the stem of marble which Giotto built for the bells and made of auroral colour; beyond, the pale ivory and worn black, the pilastered facets and bleached leaden roof of what Mr. Ruskin has called the central church of Etruscan Christianity. However that may be, you will have a sight before you which will give you little encouragement to criticise its parts—to complain, for instance, that the church lacks masses of shade, and the belfry a steeple. But there is no doubt at all that where you look at this triad with admiration, you see the Pisan group in a stupor. This is as much as to say—and all criticism of them amounts to no more—that you cannot see the things. That you cannot is the curse of Florentine prosperity. To be crown of Tuscany, or England, or great Rome, means that you must be hampered by attendants. The jackals may keep the flies from their master, but he is the less seen for a king. One test of great architecture must be its achievement of general design; and here the Florentine group necessarily fails. You cannot see them sum up and achieve the city, you cannot see them all fairly massed, you cannot see one of them full. Apart as at Pisa, pre-eminent as at Siena, no church in the world could approach the

majesty of this, nor any proportions dreamed by man come within sight of its strength to soar.

VIA TORNABUONI, FLORENCE.

In the Via Larga—which now they call Cavour—you will be in the Medicean quarter, with wide ruin on either hand, but ruin which began before

the tramways, ruin of the eighteenth century, not without a dignity of its own. Hard by the square palace which Michelezzo built for old Cosimo, is the stuccoed church of the Jesuits, which M. de Brosses admired; opposite is the stuccoed house of the Panciatichi, where he may have been entertained at evening parties. The Panciatichi left a much better house in Pistoja whence they sprang. Further, you come to the piazza, the church and the convent of Saint Mark, a yellow and plaster-smitten pile, late *rifacimento* of honest old stuff. Medici grand-dukes made a logical end of what Medici merchants began. Bianca Capello and her unhappy Francis have been here, and all the age of ruffs; Cosimo Terzo, haunted by Jesuits; Gian Gastone, shrivelling under hair-powder; gilt coaches;[1] fine gentlemen in skirts—the redoubtable Signor Casanova, Knight of the Golden Spur, among them, braving it with the best and told to go; great ladies in hoops, and improper females in masks; and all the barefoot mob of Florentines in the background, voiceless now, who of old had held the Gonfalon, idle, who once had made the city, vicious, screaming for shows, or drowsing amid filth and flies under the sun; a cityful of

[1] Which had glass tops, said Montaigne, in order that gentlemen riding at ease might look at the women at their windows.

courtesans, pimps, *castrati*, led-captains, dicing soldiers, *abbés*, and minion pages, false, glittering, rotten, crapulous, all that you choose to call it of the sort, but yet replete with character, a specific thing, a real inhabited country. Standing here, with the shell at your ear, you may dream

VILLA PALMIERI.

at large and fill up with flesh and blood the hollow ghosts you discern under the eaves.

The Piazza Santa Maria, to which you will presently go, is in my poor judgment the finest in Florence, and the least disturbed, except perhaps that of the Signiory. It has two good *Quattrocento* buildings, the façade of its titular church and the

loggia opposite; the space and light are ample enough to give value to the rest. It looks bigger than it is. Here also you must be content with an eighteenth-century effect, for here it was that La Pisanella—a fair, frail and devirginate lady—sent two honest gentlemen to battle for her worthless person, and from a window facing the church watched the fray. The duel was with swords; they killed each other, and a third man bought La Pisanella. It is not too much to say that the Grand Dukes rebuilt Florence; for by what they added of monstrous, or vapid, or grandiose, they sucked the sap from the more sober work of their forefathers, and what you see of this is but a pale penumbra of the truth.

So indeed you may walk about Florence for a first view, and be disconcerted with what you see. But the old charm can be recaptured at will. If by patches and remnants you have to divine your ways about the dead old place, by a short walk outside it you can colour your work. Florence in her cup of verdure, seen from Settignano or Fiesole, or (looking north) from the Piazzale, or the terrace of San Miniato, is still one of the fairest, most gentle prospects a man may need to look upon. Watched from San Miniato you may believe it all to be as it was once—that it is still

Florence

the garden which Montaigne considered it when he surveyed it from the top of Giotto's tower. The colour of the whole blends into soft white

BELLOSGUARDO, FLORENCE.

and purple; pre-eminent is the great dome, the bulk of the great rosy church. All about, brown and violet, yellow and pearl, the city with towers and loggias spreads like a root of flowers.

Beyond are the weathered hillsides—grey, white, and black—a severe picture in *grisaille*. In the cleft huddles Fiesole with one thin tower; to the right a bare rock, a wood densely dark. But clouds of olive draw your eye downwards to San Gervasio and the garden-splendour of the plain. And so you are always drawn in Tuscany, wheresoever your feet may be fixed, to the pleasant seat, the abundance, the power and pride of Florence.

APPENDIX

FATE OF FLORENCE

THE proud, splendid, and miserable fate of Florence, to be Tuscan Crown in despite of Fiesole from whom she sprang—of Pisa, before whom in the beginning she was but a mean village—of Lucca, whose champion once laid her lower than the dust—and of Siena, Lady of all the valleys leading south,—is due to a dozen wafts of chance meeting at a point. Not to her seat on Arno, for Pisa had a better; not to the greatness of some one De' Medici, for Petrucci of Siena was as great as any, and Castruccio of Lucca had been greater than he. Both are factors, but neither is the radical fact. That lies deep in the Florentine temper,—hard, bright, restless, and cool, salient in both Dante and Machiavelli, and latent in one Medici after another in a steady stream. That temper was, in Tuscany, and proved itself to be, the temper to endure. Florence underwent precisely the same stresses as every Tuscan town—as San Miniato with her Mangiadori and Malpigli at throat-cutting, as San Gimignano with her Ardinghelli and Salvucci, Pistoja

with Cancellieri and Panciatichi, Arezzo with Tarlati and Ubertini, as Siena with her Tolomei and Salimbeni. Florence had her Montagu and Capulet, and had them over and over. Buondelmonte, the stabbed jilt, was not even the first. I think that in Florence the people made themselves earlier a power in the land; I think that in Florence they were unique in holding what they got for so long as they did. That is a matter little to the argument, since the fall was all the greater when they fell. But where the Florentine temper showed was

THE ARNO, FLORENCE.

in the underthought which kept corporate Florence close to the road marked out, even while separate Florentines were rending and slicing each other. That is the one remarkable feature of Florentine history, which is otherwise as fretful, fidgety, and purposeless as that of one and all of her neighbours; and it is really remarkable, and admirable, that in all the discord and internal strife of her first three centuries, when house was against house, and trade against trade; when the river was a highway between enemies' camps, and a man fortified his house by bricking up the windows, or by burning his neighbour's; in spite of the red ruin of Monteaperto, the wet ruin of Altopascio (for if they reddened Arbia, they

blackened Guanciana)[1]; when a party held power for a year at the price of exile for a lifetime, and no man could tell what edicts to-morrow would utter against him; through the mad disease of bells ringing to arms, or torches carrying death by night from quarter to quarter—through poverty, starvation, plague, shame, treachery, and excommunication, the commune of Florence threw out fingers over the valleys and into the recesses of the hills. By good or bad means they subdued the land to their own profit. Much of this conquest was forced upon them: they had dangerous neighbours. There were the Conti Guidi to the east, the Uberti and Alberti, the Pazzi and others—German robbers by origin, now feudatories of the Empire, but no less German and no less thieves. These and their like, perched in towers upon all the hills, had Florence (as you may say) by the windpipe. She would have been strangled if they had lived. She brought them in, made citizens of them, and had to pay for that poor expedient. They did not cease to be feudatories, Germans or robbers because they had palaces in Florence; they ground down the burghers, dragged them into their family-feuds, set them all by the ears. But Florence weathered these things and tamed their barbarous doers. The Guelf-Ghibelline, Black and White discords were the Florentine Wars of the Roses; when arms were laid down there was hardly a great name alive. Read in Villani the lists; extinguished or fallen to mean estate, is the cry. That was the time for a Henry VII.; and Cosimo de' Medici, *Pater Patriæ*, was in waiting.

Fiesole, always a den of thieves, and Prato which lay to hand, fell as a matter of course. Pistoja had to be fought for: there was pressing need of this, apart from the value of holding such a gate into the Apennines. Pistoja could be reached by way of the Val di Nievole, and was accessible to Pisa or

[1] The great slaughter of this battle was not at Altopascio itself. The Florentines ran too fast. But Castracane caught them at Ponte a Cappiano and drowned most of them in the river.

Loggia de Lanzi, Florence.

Lucca; indeed that was how Castruccio Castracane had reached it. The way in which he used it, as a base of deadly operations against Florence, showed the value and sealed the fate of the little city. Then came the turn of Arezzo, famous seat

OLD HOUSES ON THE ARNO.

of Ghibellines and fighting bishops. The way to her up the Arno was marked by a series of castles,—Figline, Incisa, Monte di Croce, and others,—all of which had held enemies of Florence, and all reinforced by Arezzo. After the deaths of Bishop Guido Tarlati and of Castracane—fatal allies against

our ease!—Florence laid hold of Arezzo. Arezzo bit and kicked herself free; but she lay on a safe road to Rome, so Florence tried again. In 1384, when the whole state was in a life-and-death grip with the Great Snake of Milan, Arezzo was bought from a Flemish Condottiere for money and never let go again. Cortona was bought, Leghorn was bought, smaller towns surrendered—towns like Certaldo, San Gimignano, Montepulciano. Volterra was sacked and burned; Pisa, her bitterest enemy, was bought. Last to fall was Siena, the city of the Virgin; but it needed an alliance of Pope and Emperor with Cosimo the First, it needed brutal Spaniards and treacherous Frenchmen, a ruthless siege and horrible massacre to get it; but gotten it was. The Sienese, as Mr. Heywood records,[1] had "offended too great a man." So Florence went on, heedless of troubles in her own nest, never losing a chance and never letting go. It was an odd turn of events that the one people in all Tuscany she never could over-reach was that industrious, mild-mannered, gentle nation of the Val di Serchio. It needed Napoleon to win Lucca.

All this points to a long-winded if not too scrupulous race. But if you embark on a career of empery you will not wear gloves, and I declare much admiration for the Florentines. More praiseworthy still is it that, amid all their public and private griefs, they built up their city to be an image of their state. They began the Duomo, not long after the triumph of Campaldino, it is true, but in the very midst of the burnings and slayings with which Giano della Bella accomplished the Ordinances of Justice. The disastrous flood of 1333, which swept away all the bridges, knocked down St. Zenobio's column, and drowned the statue of Mars, was but a signal to this high-spirited commune to rebuild their town. Giotto began upon his Campanile; the Duke of Athens came and tyrannised, and was driven out; yet by 1378 the Duomo was completed, and before the century was done every great church

[1] In his admirable little book (one of several) upon *The Palio of Siena.*

you can now see in Florence was done or doing. This must needs have been a great people; and so it was. There was

PONTE SANTA TRINITA, FLORENCE.

none other in Tuscany just like it. The Sienese spirit was a consuming and leaping fire: I doubt the record of bloodshed in that beautiful town would far exceed the Florentine, as their church, if they could possibly have built it, would have held

Santa Maria del Fiore in its belly. The Sienese flung into the work, but the plague stayed them; nothing but a wall and vast empty windows remain of what they intended—the gaunt outposts of a marble host. Neither pestilence nor waterfloods stayed the Florentines, whose fire was less generous, but more perdurable.

The Grand Duchy of Tuscany is of nine thousand square miles and no more; but you must reckon to find within it two dozen different nations. You may say with safety that every city was a nation, and indeed that so every city still is. If I were to add that every *paese*, *paesetto*, *terra*, every village and hamlet contains a race of men apart from every other, with a peculiar pride, code of custom, religious trend, habit of mind, and that once upon a time the very quarters of each city were as jealous and rigid of their own as the cities themselves, I should not be far wrong. In Siena this obtains at this hour. If a girl of the Goose should wed with a man of the Shell, she will leave him on the day of the Palio, when Shell and Goose and Wave and Civet, and the thirteen other "nations" of the little city, contend with words and blows who shall win, or (more truly) who shall not win, the silken banner. In the villages about Florence, in Settignano and Corbignano, at Ponte a Ema and Grassina, and all the rest, the same thing prevails. To a Settignanese him of Corbignano is a hog; and so with the others. Dante not only hated, but scorned specifically every race in Tuscany. His proud nose seemed to know them by their smell, as he certainly knew Baldo d' Aguglione and Fazio of Signa. The Casentine swine, the Aretine lapdogs, the Pisan foxes, the jobbers of Lucca, and the featherheads of Siena, he hated with nicety, the bitter, great, sad man; but he only did after his kind. It is true he hated his own people more than any; but he did not scorn them so much. There is in this fact, if looked at rightly, the key to the history of Italy, which has never been and never will be a nation. If two little towns within ten miles of each other are as disparate and inimical as Pisa and Lucca, how shall you

hope to make the Neapolitan lie down with the Piedmontese, or invite the Venetian to lap out of the Florentine dish? If Tuscany itself was never a nation—as essentially it was not, but rather an estate of the Medici's—how should Italy be?

To adventures proper in Tuscany, then, to reasonable entertainment of what is put before you, one thing is absolutely necessary—an inkling of the character of the people who expressed themselves in such directions. In history character is the key to the box, in art it is more likely the treasure in the box. Wild, fervent, adorable Tuscan race! their character was Destiny sure enough.

> Sempre la confusion delle persone
> Principio fù del mal della cittade,

says Cacciaguida to Dante. Where every townsman's hand was against his neighbour the city was at the mercy of the most ruthless hand; and if, as mostly was the case, there were two hands equally strong, it must fall to a foreigner. So fell one after another all the towns in Tuscany to the strongest of the Medici; and so had fallen Florence herself to this most Florentine race. So much for character in Tuscan history; in Tuscan art, if I am not mistaken, it is the root of the whole matter. Just as Tuscan landscape is by no means pre-eminently beautiful, so Tuscan art, judged by the standards of Venice, Holland, Spain, fails in respect of body, form, and abiding splendour, and Tuscan literature (Dante and Machiavelli always apart) is trivial and diffuse. The charm of all three is character: in landscape the distinct, clean colours,—the grey, the cool blue, the yellow,—the shapes of the trees, cypress, plane, and ilex, and above all the buildings, which make the Val d' Arno a garden; in art the candour of the child which every Tuscan is, though it makes parody of tragedy and mystery-play of the Christian verities, disarms the mind by stroking the heart. To look at a Tuscan picture to judge it is to feel your little son's hand at your chin at the moment

you will scold. What can you do but give the sweet coax a kiss? And so in literature. There is a scent, an aroma, a pungency indefinable about the most frivolous Tuscan sonneteer, an orderly disposition in their everlasting histories, a fastidious choice in the conduct of their insipid novels—qualities which as a writer you must respect and as a reader admire; qualities which set rhymes and rhymesters apart. Other things may be better done, but not these things. A Tuscan is always himself. Of their sculpture, in which they excelled all the rest of the world, and their architecture I must speak later and more at large. Certainly my contention is not weakened by any example from them. But now of the Florentine character.

You may consider the Medici, until the era of foreign marriages set in, a typical Florentine house, just as you may see in Ghirlandajo—absorbed in the exquisite variety of napery and the outsides of ladies—a typical Florentine craftsman, or in Sacchetti, with his sharply splintered jests about burghers and their wives and confessors, a typical Florentine of letters. Even Dante—the fibre, not the fire—is true Florentine, with the parts and features magnified, but neither concealed nor distorted by genius. How happy was he—this by the way—playing, and playing consummately, with the ornaments of his poem, planning it, tricking it, embossing it! Here you see the bottom of childishness which is pure Tuscan: Dante's sublime simplicity was not a peculiar of his nor of his nation's; but to that account must be credited his deliberate movement, his incisiveness and his steady pride. For the Florentine has a good conceit of himself; can be supercilious, but is not arrogant, is sharp-tongued, incisive, scornfully witty. He loves nicknames, biting jests; the name he gives you will not be the less truthful because it stings. Dante was by no means singular in this faculty, though he had it out of all Florentine ratio. Villani could hit off a man or a measure with the best of them, Sacchetti's gibes make his fame, and of all cynical, worldly-wise, caustic old statesmen, commend me to

Cosimo the Elder. "You cannot govern by paternosters," was one of his famous maxims; and another was, "An ell of

THE PONTE VECCHIO, FLORENCE.

scarlet makes a burgess." He talked proverbs, just as another great Florentine, Farinata degli Uberti, talked them at the Congress of Empoli. They were considering the razing of Florence. How else shall we poor Ghibellines go in safety

about our business? "The goat goes lame till she meets the wolf," says Farinata; and "Com' asino sape cosi minuzza rape"—As the ass is able so he bites carrots—and scorned them down.

Devout you will not find your Florentine; that he never was. He was rarely subject to those periodic surges of radiant belief, flood-tides of inspired practice, which swept over Siena and all that part of Tuscany which borders upon Umbria; and he had no relish for visionaries—political, religious, or what not. Burlamacchi of Lucca would have been hooted out of Florence; Saint Catherine herself would have been forgotten; Piero, the inspired comb-seller, who throve at Pisa, is an impossible figure for the Ponte Vecchio. There was Savonarola, I shall be told. Yes, there was Savonarola. But he captivated by his oratory more than by his faith; and the Florentines burned the monk when they were weary of the demagogue. Not imaginative by any means, but full of fancy; not mystical; most observant; charming, playful, innocent, half-quizzing, while half-tender; given to kindly tears and offices of kindness; apt to practical charity rather than theoretical; blunt-mannered without loss of dignity, and slovenly without loss of purpose; expert in head and hands to a wonderful degree—such is the Florentine, engrosser of Tuscany. He is conservative, slow in all that he does, howsoever well he may do it, and endlessly patient. Time to him is a fund to which there is no bottom; all he asks is a bucket and stout cord. So, however quick he may be to see his profit, he will be long in taking it, by no means afraid lest it may fall over-ripe by waiting. Imagine, in fine, a whimsical child with a passion for reality, who makes tangible his own weavings of impalpable embroidery, and delights in the work; then you have a Florentine artist, poet, man of letters. Imagine a frosty old financier, trading his talents and his florins with shrewd judgment, relishing the chicane as much as the usury with the zest of a boy, and laughing at himself while he gets his laugh of his neighbours; there is Cosimo

de' Medici, Father of his country, if it can be held the

THE PONTE VECCHIO.

function of a father to make his children limp. Of Machiavelli, who played with theories as with chessmen, handling

life and death, and Hell and Judgment as if they were all of a piece; of Lionardo da Vinci, painting mystery and making cages for grasshoppers; of Boccaccio, to whom love and lust, aspiration and digestion, were alike curious physical phenomena; of Luigi Pulci, of Lorenzo and his tribe of *dilettanti*—I would say the same thing. Children,—absorbed, precocious, delightful, preoccupied children, every one of them—a race whose measure of preoccupation is the measure of their success.

Despotism settled down upon them, in the true Florentine manner, very slowly; the first Medici felt their way, and turned their coats according as the wind of politics blew Black or White. Before their government began there had been every sort and no sort—anarchy, despotism, oligarchy, polygarchy, mob-rule, camp-rule, misrule, unrule. But the Florentines, whether led by the Greater Guilds or the Lesser, by Nobili, Popolo or Plebes, by Walter of Athens, Charles of Anjou, Charles of Valois, or Charles of France, the Florentines (I say) pursued their commune's profit and ennoblement; and that, I say once more, is a marvel of history. It is a marvel you will have to divine for yourself as you can. To imagine this small, hardy, acquisitive, and inquisitive race seething at first in their close lanes and brimming over their little piazzas; to hear the bells clash for this party or that, Donati or Buondelmonti, Visdomini or Uberti, Cerchi or Neri, see the factions press and sway over the bridges in hot battle, the tossing pikes, the banners wagging like trees in a gale; to be abroad when the horrible news of Altopascio or (what was far worse) of the bankruptcy of the De' Bardi, or the glorious news of Campaldino came racing into town; to listen to the screamed words of some swart trader on a balcony, watch them hail the Duke of Athens for a god on Sunday and hound him out like a hog on Sunday fortnight; to understand how through all the trick and veer of party wind the stanch old burghers and their dames—Donna Berta and Ser Martino—close-capped, twinkling, their hands folded in their cloaks,

traded in the markets, and sent their wool and their florins to the Low Countries, and prospered while their city sweated blood; to observe how custom—prim, old-fashioned custom of marriage and filial piety—outlasted every government and has not gone yet; once more, to tell how little by little the old walls gave way, and the close, four-square town spread out like brocade, and over against San Giovanni, the little white church like a tent, Brunelleschi reared his tulip-dome, Giotto threw towards heaven his staff of dawn-colour; how Giovanni di Averardo de' Medici's plain ashlar house would not hold his son Cosimo, and Cosimo's palaces were found too straight for his grandsons; how Albizzi, Strozzi, Pitti, Tornabuoni felt their feet and tilted against the Medici, and one after another went down;—all this, which is the blood of history, must be gleaned with pains from such fields as there are, and cannot be divined from what is left standing. The stumps of a few old towers, two or three old churches, and one old house, are almost all the stones to tell the tale of what was the staple of Florence. Dante is the best and surest way; being of the centre himself, his force is centripetal. He will take you there if you come within the scope of his book.

The battle of Campaldino in 1287, which almost annihilated the Ghibellines, was the highest point of the Florentine republic. There were sore years ahead—Altopascio, the French occupation, the Duke of Athens, and other griefs a many. But the nobles fell at Campaldino, and that was the first step upwards of the Medici. Their chance came when old Cosimo was exiled and returned triumphant, and was sealed to them when Lorenzo escaped the Pazzi knife. In 1476 when they murdered the Sforza in Milan, the Pope mourned the death of Peace. He did well; but the life of the Medici was then good for three hundred years. With firm government, Florence, being what she was, could not but grow. It was perhaps her fortune—at least she thought so when they were all out—that the ruling house produced, in its cadet branch (when the elder went out in a murdered negro

bastard), a line of mainly honest, dull princes. The vain-glory of a great marriage—alliance with Austria—betrayed them. The Hapsburg lip and the feeble Hapsburg obstinacy made a sardonic end of the Medici in Cosimo III., the hag-ridden bigot, and Gian Gastone, a padded, bewigged mask of a man.

TOWER OF THE VIA DELL' OCHE.

CHAPTER VIII

OF TROY, OF FIESOLE, AND ROME

> Favoleggiava con la sua famiglia
> Dei Trojani, di Fiesole, e di Roma.
> 15 *Par.* 126.

The stock of Troy.

If the apple of Eve sent men out into Asia, it was Helen's fruit that filled Europe with heroes. For when tall Troy went down, and the scamper began, both of them who ran home, and of them who ran from it, the progeny of Priam travelled far and wide, seeking friendly soil; and wherever they settled—such was their inalienable prerogative—they became kings. This is why Hector is the favourite above Achilles, and both Chaucer and Shakespeare sided with Troilus against Diomede, because, in a sense, we are all nephews of these peers. Thus were Germany, France, England provided with rulers, but not Fiesole. Fiesole declared herself older than the oldest. The grandfather of the man who first built Troy was

Atlas, king of Fiesole. This is a proud arrogation. Rome was contented with Ascanius, Siena with Remus, Padua with Antenor, Venice with Priam the younger—Trojans all and good men; as for Florence, a friend of Julius Cæsar was honourable parent enough. But for Fiesole nothing would do but the root of the whole world's title, the very well-spring of the Fountain of Honour. This is as if a man were to claim descent, not from Adam, but from the worm who made fecund the soil whereof God made him.

Dante's housewife of the old fashion, spinning her yarn and wondrous genealogies together, had much to say of those great days when nations walked the fair fields of earth on two legs apiece, choosing where they should settle, and beget, and have kingdoms. This was the round of it—how the sons of King Atlas went to the East and reared up Troy, then (being scattered by the Greeks) his grandsons came back and made a greater Troy, even Rome the city. For Atlas begat Italus, Dardanus, and Sicanus. Dardanus new-built Troy, which took its name from his grandson Troius. The son of Troius was Ilion—whence another of Troy's names—and of Ilion, Laomedon. All this was in the days of Hercules and Jason, done long before Hector stalked the ramparts, or Achilles busked him with the maids

in Scyros. Great fabling! of which our tales of Arthur, and Charlemagne, and Perceforest were

TORRE DEL ARTE DELLA LAMA.

pale reflections; for certainly you cannot carve greater pieces for your game than realms as men

walking, nor could any marriage of prince and princess, which the fairies might bless, have such fortunate issue as that portentous coupling of Æneas of Troy and Lavina, the daughter of King Latinus.

But for the origins of Florence you must seek a lowlier plane. Fæsulan beginning could not be denied, though all good Florentines affected to be ashamed of it. "Note this," says Villani in a peroration, "for why the Florentines are everlastingly at war and discord with each other; which is no marvel, being drawn and engendered from two peoples so contrary, inimical, and divers in custom as were those noble, valiant Romans and the Fæsulans, harsh and brutal in war." From this discord, from this malignant conjunction, comes the name of the city. Florence, Firenze, Fiorenza, he tells you, is compounded of the Latin *Florum Ensis*, the Sword of Flowers, the Blossoming Blade. And why? Because the Romans and the Fæsulans, having compounded their quarrels, agreed to lie down together in a flowery field by Arno. When Villani adds that this field was chosen, and first dwelt in, by the noble Roman Florinus, he has, you perceive, that old sow Etymology firmly by the ear, the tail, and one leg. If the name of our city cannot be derived

The Roman seed.

A Fiesole

from one of these—the sword, the flowers, or the aptly-named Roman—then (in Heaven's name) derive from all three! Thus the Florentine

FIESOLE.

chroniclers picked up history from nicknames, which is coming to be our modern practice.

I suppose Villani's story is well known. When Quintus Metellus had crushed Catiline and his

host in the Campo Piceno, "con tempesta impetuosa ed agra," he went up to punish Fiesole for her harbourage of the great rebel, met that nation in the valley of the Arno, and was discomfited at the first assault. For a second he laid more careful plans. A part of his force he detached and gave in charge of the noble Fiorino, who was to cross the river at Rovezzano and take the Fæsulans in the rear. It is not clear by any means why Metellus was across Arno; but across it he was. Fiorino did his duty, with results momentous to this history. The men of Fiesole were routed; a part was cut to pieces, a part fled home to the hill. The Romans sat down before the city, built and trenched a camp, and sending to Rome for Julius Cæsar, Cicero and others, awaited the starvation of the enemy. But this did not occur; the Fæsulans had stout hearts, the Romans wearied, many returned to Rome, and of these Cicero may well have been one. The noble Fiorino and his company remained. That entrenched camp which he had made became old, square Florence; and if he himself did not give name to the city, flowers of some sort did. "For," as my author says, "Fiorino died in that very spot, who was of chivalry the flower; and in the place and in the fields about it for ever sprang flowers and lilies. Wherefore

the greater number of the inhabitants agreed to call their city Floria, as if it had been built up among flowers, that is, among many delightful things." This is a charming story, which gives

THE CONVENT, FIESOLE.

one as much insight into the good Villani as into Florentine beginnings.

Then there is Benvenuto Cellini's account, I think, the best of all. That immortal ruffian says directly that Fiorino was his lineal ancestor. His

name in full was Fiorino da Cellino. It is quite true, he allows, that Fiorino's quarters were on the site of the present city, but his name was given to it in a more natural way. His friends in the army, having frequent occasion to consult him upon matters of business or pleasure, got into the way of saying, whenever any difficulty arose, "Let us go down to Fiorino's," "Andiamo a Fiorino." Therefore, when it came to giving a local name to this new Rome, no better occurred to Cæsar than Fiorenze, which is, as we should say, "Fiorino's place." So Benvenuto da Cellino, the too handy man, braved it in the Florence of Duke Alexander with the blood of its founder singing in his veins. This is the best account I have yet learned of the origin of Florence.

Benvenuto's account.

Professor Villari and the learned moderns, while varying in points of detail, accept most of these propositions. Florence was an Etruscan settlement, an offshoot of Fiesole, a lower town, in fact, to get the uses of the river. There was certainly a Roman colony there. Julius Cæsar, Cicero, Fiorino, may or may not have come; Charlemagne too, whose presence is testified by a long inscription on the church of the SS. Apostoli, may or may not have come. The Tuscans are great lapidarists to this day, and a legend is none

the worse for being chiselled. What happened

FIESOLE.

afterwards is clear. The lower town prospered,

the upper town did not. The upper town took to thieving, being aided therein (*a*) by the presence of certain Germans, Ubaldini and others, and (*b*) by the fact that the lower town lay to hand. The lower town resented this; so in the year ten hundred and ten, in the time of the first Bavarian and first Henricus Cæsar, the Florentines, as they now were, took Fiesole by trick, but with humanity. They killed none but who resisted; to the rest they gave the choice—to live in Florence, or elsewhere in Italy than on their hill. Many came to Florence, and the arms were altered to party red and white. The red, with a white lily, was the old blazon which Florence had from Rome (says Villani), and the white was Fiesole's, which bore a crescent moon. A hundred years later the Rock of Fiesole, the *arx*, in fact, had to be destroyed. It had served certain gentlemen-thieves, Cattani, for purposes of rapine. What is extraordinary—or would be anywhere but in Tuscany—is that to this hour the Fæsulans are a race apart, as different from the Florentines as chalk from cheese.

Of the two strains in them the Florentines loved only the Roman. The Etruscan, to which

The holy breed.

they owed all their art and most of their wits, was nothing accounted of. The great deeds of Rome, which never lacked a

trumpet to proclaim them, have dizzied later ears than Dante's and Villani's. But they dizzied

SAN MINIATO, FLORENCE.

theirs. It is enough reason for Villani that the Fæsulans were "ever rebel against Rome;" Dante, who could hate with the steady malignity

of the true Florentine, assailed them without reason:—

> That ancient, ingrate, spiteful stock
> Which from Fiesole came down,
> And savours yet of ridge and rock—

Without reason, say I; for if a race is to be called ungrateful you must show for what their gratitude is due. And in another place, very much after his manner, he sees in the Black Guelfs the dung of Fiesole, and in the White, himself and his party, the "sementa santa" of imperial Rome. Of this "holy breed," truly, Florence could never have enough. It inspired Villani to search the Scriptures, it led Dante through the three great kingdoms of the Dead. Both of them were in Rome for the Jubilee of Pope Boniface. Villani, "beholding the great and ancient stuff of which she was fashioned; reading the histories and noble deeds of the Romans written by Virgil, and Sallust, and Lucan, by Titus Livius, and Valerius, and Paulus Orosius, and other masters of history, who wrote down the little things as well as the great ones for a memory and example to those who were to come,—took style and plan from them, a poor disciple, unworthy of so high a business." But, withal, Florence was in his eyes "daughter and creature of Rome," *figliuola e fattura di Roma*,

and upon her climb after great achievements.

SAN MINIATO, FLORENCE.

With this thought he heartened himself to be delightful, useful, comfortable to the Florentines

in their great aims; the which they should surely attain, "seeing they are descended from a noble stock and a valiant nation, as were the ancient worthy Trojans and the weighty noble Romans." Therefore he began his task with a prayer for the help of Jesus Christ. To Dante Rome was so sacred that to slight her was a blasphemy:—

> This holy stock who robs or maims
> With blasphemy offends his God,
> Who fashioned it for His high aims.

It is doubtful what he would have made of Christianity without Roman sanction. But—the longer seer than Villani—he knew what Rome implied for the Latin races. Whether the Florentines were Roman of the half or the whole blood, Rome must prevail.

It is all one now. Of Etruscan Florence and of Roman no vestige worth the name is above-ground. Cyclopean walls stand at Fiesole, a Roman amphitheatre baked pale by the sun, happy in old age with sprouting toad-flax, quick with lizards and cicalas. The little town has a savage air within and without, and a family likeness not to be mistook to Cortona, Perugia, and dreadful Volterra. Wheresoever you may be in the lower Valdarno you will see Fiesole standing as it did, a ragged menace to the plain, grey and serried on a grey

Fiesole.

hill. The amenities and good fortunes of Florence have banished all this from her fruitful midst: you must look for what is to be had in the Museum, the best in Europe, I believe. There you will see what the Etruscans could do in the ways of art, and obtain, as Herr Baedeker madly cries,

SAN MINIATO.

"an insight into their gloomy and realistic disposition." I suppose the learned man was saddened by the tombs, which are many and vast, wishful to forget that even he must die. What does he mean? Was it gloomy of the Etruscans to dispose of their dead? What, then, should Herr Baedeker's own relatives refrain, and

leave his corse to fritter upon the plains of Leipzig? As for their "realistic disposition," are the Shrouded Gods realistic? Is the parting of Admetus and Alcestis anything but a delightful embroidery? Or the embracing of Semele and

SAN MINIATO.

Bacchus more serious than that of Lippo Lippi's pretty servants kissing at Prato? Fie, fie, Herr Baedeker! If the Gods were thus to be seen the seer was not gloomy; or if he was gloomy he was not realistic. An erudition such as this, which concentrates so readily upon epigram, confuses the mind. There is more safety in cab-fares,

believe it. It is my humble belief that the Etruscans, like the Florentines, having sur-

SAN GIOVANNI.

rounded themselves with an unseen world full of terrors and traps for the mortal, proceeded to

forget as much of it as possible—to portray the Gods as fair men and women, and to mourn their dead with facile tears, alike the happy and unhappy. They "took the day" like the rest of us, and did not cut down the rose until they were obliged. And if I desired to study the art of Giotto and Donatello and Matteo di Giovanni to its root, I should haunt the Etruscan Museum in the Via della Colonna more than I have done. But of such things there may be more to say later.

The walls of Fiesole are Etruscan, its theatre is Roman, and its church Romanesque; yet noble as this last is, or has been, there is a nobler by Florence, and within the walls yet one other, to which I invite attention as the most venerable in this land. For Fiesole's church looks across Arno to Miniato's, and each can see her sister in the valley. Between the three the whole story has been said, and by them been watched from any beginning you can profitably choose. Each had been built before the Countess Maud died,[1] and before Cacciaguida looked upon the worthies of Florence; therefore, before Florence herself saw a chance of being a free commune,

[1] In 1115. This is the date usually given to the rise of the Tuscan Communes; as a fact, they got their chance when the Emperor Henry fell out with Pope Gregory the Great.

these three linked churches declared God. Climb, then,

> A man destra, per salire al monte
> Dove siede la chiesa che soggioga
> La ben guidata sopra Rubaconte;

and thence go down to San Giovanni. All of Rome that lasted in Florence is in these buildings.

San Miniato.

In that airy chapel, which Michelozzo built into the wall of San Miniato, rests the young Cardinal of Portugal, a priest and, what is more, a virgin, who died young. He has, for the comfort of his blessed dust, one of the blithest, most delicate tombs in the world: there was no "gloomy and realistic disposition" in Michelozzo. Rossellino's Mother of Heaven turns her pointed chin benignly down that she may smile upon the sleeping lad. The Gesulino gives him blessing; angels and little naked boys support the bier. This dead boy looks as if the latest breath had but now fluttered out of his nostrils, as if with that last sigh of content he had turned his cheek to the pillow and closed his eyes for long sleep. Above him in the cupola, which may figure but does not attempt to image the sky, in blue and white on green, are the Della Robbia virtues—seven of them—like trim girls; and before his tired eyes,

if he could be induced to open them once more, Baldovinetti has an angel in brocade upon a field of old green and crimson, playing the immortal drama of the Annunciation. Thus you may find without offence, in a Romanesque church of absolute dignity and reticence, this chapel, neo-classic but of exquisite proportion and colour, and be conscious of little or no difference between them. There is just such another in Florence, I mean the Pazzi chapel in Santa Croce cloister. But Santa Croce is a Gothic church, and the conjunction jars.

The truth is, that the difference between the Lombard builders of the eleventh and the Tuscan builders of the fifteenth centuries is only one of degree. Brunelleschi, Cronaca, Michelozzo knew less and thought less about the Christian verities, but what they knew and what they thought went no further for all its addition of four hundred years. The Lombard builders could not look beyond this world, and could imagine no other where the Roman concept of law did not prevail; the Neo-Classicists *would* not look beyond it. In a manner of speaking, these Romanesque churches of San Miniato and San Giovanni, and with them the Cathedral of Pisa, express an earth-bred, earth-fed, earth-abiding religious sense; and so in a manner of speaking

do the neo-classic. That is to say, they express nothing less finite. In the Roman basilica sat

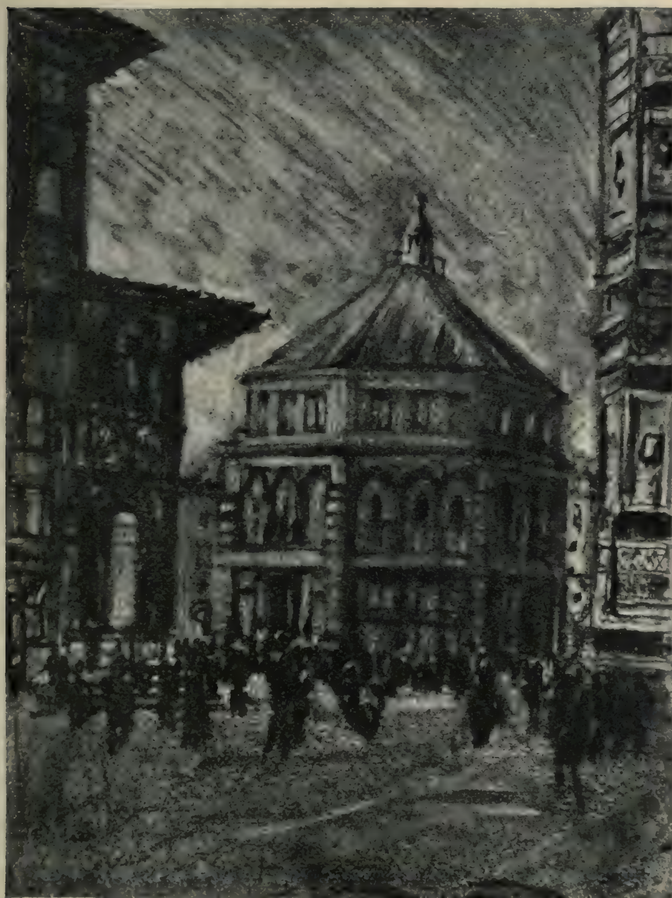
FLORENCE FROM SAN MINIATO.

Tiberius Cæsar or his prætor, in the Romanesque basilica it is Christus Cæsar, Christus

Nimbipotens, who sits—He or His prætor—judging the quick as surely as He shall judge the dead. Below His tribune, in an open crypt, lies His justified witness. They called this place the Confessio, which indeed it was. In San Miniato it is of extreme beauty, of slight and almost Saracen grace: six rows of thin columns, four deep, hold arches lightly horse-shoed; there is a low stone altar in the middle, and under it the bones (or some of them) of Miniatus, eldest son of the king of Armenia, who suffered under Decius even unto decapitation. Thereupon he took his head in his guiltless hands, and walked dry foot over Arno back to his hermitage on the hill; and there he died, and there was buried and revered.[1] Then there is the upper choir, which contains the tribune, rich in *opus alexandrinum*, mosaic and marble. Its windows are of sliced onyx; everything about it befits the kingly seat. And the king is more here than elsewhere, be sure, for nothing points any other way than to the Presence. The church is set solidly on the earth where He solidly sits. Tall marble columns bear up the arches of the nave, the roof is flat and heavily beamed; all the lines are horizontal, all the weight rests square on the foundations; there is no outside support, no

[1] See G. Villani, i. 57, for this delightful tale at large.

soaring, no tracery, no vaulting. What do we know of mansions in the skies? Spacious is this



THE BAPTISTRY, FLORENCE.

place, airy, full of light, self-sufficing, self-supporting. You are to imagine nothing, look

up for nothing more. All that you need is here. What you learn by the inside by the outside you can surmise—severity, a cold splendour of ivory, black and green. Atop of all is a bronze eagle, above the middle window a gold mosaic. Imperial religion, Roman pride and stately order; Christ in judgment, come to His own; not the Christ of poor Brother Francis and the bleeding feet. Such is the Church of the faith to which Florence was born, which the good Countess Maud mortified by her vexed legacy, and which Dante called upon high Henry to restore.

When you come out of this weighty temple and cool your forehead on the terrace, you may see below you, as in a cup, a tumbled pool of brown, purple, and yellow, the city herself, with two great domes and two tall towers dominating all. There also you will find testimony of a religion no less different from your own than this of old Rome. Look west of the tower of Giotto, whose colour seen from here is that of young fire; between it and San Lorenzo you will see a plain mound of building, the white tent-roof of San Giovanni, sister of this church, and all that remains of the Florence which Dante walked. Extreme east and west of it you have two spires, one like a needle, the other like a spear, with a bunch about the blade. They

signify the new heaven and new earth which Francis and Dominick came to reveal. Out of them and of what they mean grew visible Florence.

The little octagon—all that is left of *Fiorenza quadrata* and the Countess—looks dwarfed and

THE BAPTISTRY, FLORENCE.

anæmic beside that glowing church of the Flower, and the citron, rose, and dark of Giotto's lovely shaft; to learn its true significance in the aspect of the older town one must see the position it occupies in such a picture as the *Nozze Adimari* in the Accademia. In that day, as in Dante's and Villani's, it was the

San Giovanni.

Cathedral, purged of all but the memory of its former patron, the god Mars. In the wedding picture you may see the tigerish little building stand apart from the Gothic Bigallo, and pre-eminent over all the gaudy corbelled houses and towers. To this very day, to my own fancy, it has supreme distinction among all the buildings of Florence. It has, what San Miniato has also, the sanity, the elegance, the large disposition, antique order and grace—qualities which are the peculiar of Romanesque. Small, it makes itself felt; half-buried in the rubbish of our day—touts, pedlars, tourists, photographers, and lecturers—its serenity bathes the eyes. It is a rest to look upon its smooth, rubbed face. Fine proportions, venerable memories, are responsible for much of this, no doubt, but good building more. When hope ceases to be bounded by sight, stone and lime are no better than mud and wattles. And the builders of this church and the like of them, though they may have demanded a monument more perdurable than brass, hardly cared to expect it. When God could of a verity be lodged in a church, made anew every day, and adored upon an altar, the work must needs be of the best. So San Giovanni is still worthy of its Guest, though the tourists do not inquire if He be there. There, more than elsewhere, I believe

Him to be. I like to think, when I am in Florence, looking at the havoc time and trade have wrought, that San Giovanni and what it signifies, having outlived Leo X. and all that he signified, may still shine, white and calm, upon a saner world than ours. But I become a philosopher. Think rather of San Giovanni, not (as most visitors are taught to think) as a monstrance of three bronze doors, but as the august emblem of Dante's Florence, unimpeachable for what it is, the universal mother of the place; where Cacciaguida was made "Christian and Cacciaguida," and Folco Portinari's girl was named Beatrice, and Piero di Cosimo de' Medici brought a swarthy, squab-nosed little monster and had him called Lorenzo, after the patron of his quarter. The great font, wherein Dante dived after a drowning initiate, is gone; the altar is cold, the candlesticks are pinchbeck, and the candles are made of wood; up in the cold fog you see dim figures of prophets and patriarchs stand like mountains in the mist. They looked once at the Countess of Tuscany at her prayers. The devout pilgrim must content himself with them, and the pavement, and what sacred air may remain.

The great Countess died and was buried at Pisa by the side of her mother. She—the mother, I mean—lies in that very sarcophagus whose slim

Hippolytus and deep-breasted Phædra made Niccolo Pisano dream dreams, with this inscription carved amid the Ephebi and flying horsemen:—

The Countess Maud.

> Quamvis peccatrix Sum Domna vocata Beatrix:
> In tumulo missa Jaceo quæ Comitissa—

which, for a blend of pride and piety in irony, is hard to be beat. The urn would have more seemly held the Countess's own dust; for, according to Villani, she lived as chaste as Hippolytus, though unwillingly. She was legendary, and almost apotheosised in his day. He makes her daughter of the Emperor of the East and an Italian gentlewoman, of "noble manners and great descent." Upon report of his virtues, she sent for and married a certain Guelf of Suabia; but she married him by proxy as became the vicereine of Cæsar. Herein she was unhappy; a "natural frigidity," or (as he pretended) the acts of the devil, made Guelf a stranger to her bed. Which discovering, the Countess enacted this great scene. Into her chamber she went, and caused her women to strip her of ornament; her diadem, orb, and sceptre, her purple and pall; more, she made them loosen her hair, and leave her clothed in nothing but that—no longer a Countess and ruler of all Tuscany, but a bare and (if we may trust the chronicler) a beautiful

woman. Then she sent for her husband Guelf. "Neither my majesty nor the potency of Satan is here in this room, but only I, Maud, your wife. Come, then, husband, and wed me." But Guelf never moved. Then said the Countess,—with a fine change from "I" to "we"—"Thou hast presumed to deceive our grandeur; for the honour of which we choose to pardon thee. But we bid thee without any tarrying depart and seek thine own house. The which thing if thou delay to perform, thou mayest not escape without danger of thy life." So then he confessed the truth and made haste to go to Suabia. The Countess kept her counsel, but forswore worldly solace, devoted herself to works of piety, and when she died left all Tuscany upon the altar of Saint Peter, a legacy to the Pope. The strict fact, that she could not so dispose of a fief of the empire, made a strife in Italy which never ended until Charles V. went into Yuste cloister. Out of that strife arose the Florentine commune and the tyranny of the Medici alike.

Old Florence.

If you take for your north parallel the Via de' Cerretani, from the corner of the Via Rondinelli to that of the Via de' Servi; and your south the Via delle Terme, from where it starts in the Tornabuoni to the furthest corner of the Palazzo Vecchio; for your east parallel the

Piazza San Firenze and Via del Proconsolo to the corner of the Via de' Servi; and for your west the Tornabuoni and Rondinelli aforesaid; if you stand at the junction of the Centro with the Via Calimara, so that you can see in a straight line from the Baptistry to the Mercato Nuovo, from the Strozzi Palace down the Corso—then you will have under your eyes the Florence which christened Cacciaguida and went out to fight with the Countess Maud, and took the time of day from the belfry of the Badia on the walls. You will be in the very middle of it. Villani lingers with fondness upon it, its likeness to Rome, even in the titles and sites of its churches, and upon the austere, tight-laced lives of its citizens, their obedient sons and chaste daughters. That was the Florence of Dante's dilection too:—

> Skin-girt, bone-buckled, I saw pass
> Bellincion Berti, and his wife
> Come back unpainted from her glass.

Peace, sobriety, and shamefastness were the virtues in vogue; you married your girls at twenty and dowered them with a hundred *lire*. You kept your shop and counted your pelf; you fought when you must, and since every hill about you held a robber and his horde, you had to fight to live; your women stayed at home and looked after your daughters until you announced a

wedding. Then some tall girl or other, whom you had kept in that still, passionless house, a grown baby of twenty years, without falter or blush held out her hand. Just such another as her old block of a father took it in his, having pocketed the money and written out his quittance, and away went the maid to wear the coif and bear the fardel of women. Fine old Roman days! But dowry or no, that same Bellincion Berti made a great marriage for his girl. Gualdrada she was called, and was seen and desired by the Emperor Otto at her prayers in Santa Reparata. The Emperor asked her for a kiss, and being denied, claimed that he had the right to salute his subjects. "No man," says Gualdrada, "shall have that right of me but my husband." The Emperor gave her great praise, and bade Count Guido the Old take her and kiss her. This Count Guido the Old was lord of all the Upper Arno, a greatly descended man, son of the last survivor of the tyrants of Romagna. Gualdrada gave him four sons for his kisses, whose names were Guglielmo and Ruggieri, and Guido and Tegrimo, and from whom came much trouble, fighting, rapine, and the like, in later days. But of another sort were the stock in four-square Florence. You may class the continence of Maud and Gualdrada with the con-

tinence of Scipio. They, if you please, are of the "Sementa Santa," these men and women; and so is Dante, their stern descendant, and the church which still stands with his book to bear witness if I lie. No city need have stronger title-deeds.[1]

APPENDIX

THE STAPLE—NATURAL HISTORY OF DONNA BERTA AND SER MARTINO

DONNA BERTA and Ser Martino, whose house and shop are in the Via Calimala, not a stone's throw from Or San Michele, have six sons and five daughters. These are their names:—Romualdo, and Bertuccio, and Corradino, Bonventuro, Serafino, and Arcagnolo, young men; Caterina and Orsola, Liperata, and Collegiata, and Beata, maids. For all of these, and more than all, Ser Martino prepared his wife on the day he took her home, on the very stroke of the last guest's departure. At that moment of heart-beating too wild for natural tears, when a girl might expect to feel a man's arms like a tide engulf her knees, and climb ever up and up to float her into a new world; or when a strenuous lover would have clasped his dear to his heart, and sworn that if she would reward him she would never repent it—at that auspicious moment Ser Martino took his wife Berta by the hand and showed her where everything lay in the house. The granaries, the wood-store, the flour-box, the wine-cellar; the linen-presses, the coffers of his clothes and hers; his shoes, his slippers, and furred boots for winter; the jars of sweet oil of the three kinds that there are; the good hams

[1] See more of this in the Appendix to this chapter.

hanging to the rafters, the strung onions, the store of garlic, spices, and dry herbs. Upstairs and down, in cellar and sollar, in kitchen and larder, in pantry and hall; with every grain of his gear he made her acquaint. This done he led her up to the chamber and shot the bolt of the door. He

HALL OF THE WOOL MERCHANTS, FLORENCE.

showed her here such valuables as he had—and they were many. Silver tankards and silver platters, chains of price, ostrich eggs and unicorn's horns, blood of phœnixes congealed into tears, a gold reliquary with one of the nail-pairings of Saint Macarius of Egypt, and other precious things which it would be tedious to enumerate. Next he showed her the bed, a large bed raised upon two steps from the floor. "This

is our bed, wife," said he, "in the which I desire that you shall spend more time than I. Not that I would have you sluggish and rise late—far from it. But you will have many children—more than Leah, more than Rachel, more than the mother of Zebedee's family. I am not one of those to be controlled by their mothers, who think marriage bad for the head. My mother—God be merciful!—is in Paradise, or not far from the portals. She was a woman who must have always the best of everything, and you may be certain that she will never be content with anything less than a high seat in the topmost heaven. Therefore yours will be no case to say, 'Good for thee, sparrow, thou hast no mother-in-law,' as said the wife of Messer Aldobrando, condemned to a solitary couch. For there will be no hen-sparrow in the world more gratified than thou." Donna Berta, whose age was exactly fourteen, cast down her eyes and murmured something about obedience. She had always obeyed her natural parents; it had never been possible to do anything else. There should be no difficulty in obliging this new master, she thought. And she found there was none. He was a strict, though not ferocious husband; he very seldom beat her, and sometimes talked to her about other people's affairs, though, naturally, not of his own. One of the first things he taught her, after this first and indispensable lesson, was that she must never set foot in the shop, never look at his ledgers or know where he kept his strong-box, and never ask him where he had been or what he had been doing. Being entirely dull, blankly ignorant, and very good, she took all these injunctions soberly and in honest faith, and proved an admirable wife in bed and at board, upstairs and down. She bore him sixteen children, of whom five died young; and now you may see her, in mid-fourteenth-century, a handsome, staid, broad-bosomed woman, still the upper servant in the house, and still a stranger to the shop, in the Via Calimala. Clamour in the Council chamber, hue-and-cry, fighting in the streets, foreign wars, foreign

tyrants—all the crash and din of the noisy Tuscan world have passed over her like summer storms. She may have listened to the wild bells and hoarse voices which followed them (beginning with a dull roaring afar off, and swelling and swelling till the light of day seemed to flicker at it); she may have run to the window and leaned out to see the Caroccio go swinging by, escorted by running mobs, or the pikemen and arquebusiers file singing towards the Prato gate; for frenzied moments she may have exerted her plump hand to bar the street door against drunken Burgundians, or some daring French knight spying after maids. At such times she would cry them a bad Easter, and cross herself vehemently and patter her prayers. But mainly she lived placidly, sewing or spinning with her daughters in the front room, walking abroad very rarely after morning mass, seeing all she wanted of Florence from the cushioned window-sill, half hidden by the shutters, which gave on to the Calimala.

Of greater descent than her master—for she was an Acciajoli, and her father's houses together made a palace—she accepted her position, and looked loyally at his climbing-feats to gain places which had been hers by prerogative right. From Capetudine of his Guild to be Camarlingo, then Gonfalonier; chosen for Podestà of Poppi in the Casentino, one of the Greater Council, Prior of the city for his term, sent upon embassies here and there—once to Perugia, once to Viterbo, once, indeed, as far as Venice (whence he brought back stories of turbaned men and camels, and streets where the tide flowed twice a day): all these things were added unto Ser Martino; and Donna Berta, who might have waited upon the Emperor's lady or been abbess of a convent by this time, exulted at every fresh triumph, and plumed herself among her neighbours, like the good burgher's wife she had become. A jaunt into the gardens on May day, when perhaps she would go as far as Rovezzano on a mule's back, a visit to the miracle-play at Corpus Christi—when they did

the Passion and Ascension of Christ under a starred blue awning in the Piazza Santa Croce—the amazing miracle of the Sacred Fire on Sabbato Santo, a marriage feast at a neighbour's, or a good funeral,—here were her yearly pleasures, for which she served Ser Martino faithfully, without hope or promise of any other reward than to see her sons with wives, to be ridded of her daughters by marriage or the veil, and to have a place upon her husband's monument, when she would be carried feet foremost to the Annunziata and laid by his side below the pavement. Good, placid, comfortable Donna Berta, of passions so few, and of prejudices so many, with five daughters to bring up in the way she had gone!

In her teaching she did not disguise from these girls that they were a dead loss to the business. Husbands would have to be purchased for them out of such funds as their father could spare. When that ran short, into the convent with the rest! His money was much engaged; the cloth-trade was not what it had been for decent merchants—God knew why He had suffered the Frati to enter into trade! Caterina, who was turned fifteen, would be settled, of course: she was a broad-hipped, broad-faced, simple child, but knew her markets. Fifty gold florins might buy her a good man. Then there was Orsola. Orsola was handsomer there was no denying; Orsola was the beauty of the bunch—a fine, freely made, small-headed, blue-eyed girl; a little pert, a little too red in the mouth—"she hath a kissing mouth," says Donna Berta, "and that is no way to get husbands. A man can have kisses from his *buon' amica;* he wants housewifery from the likes of my girls. But I shall do what I can for Orsola when Caterina is off my hands. For the other three"—here she lifted her hands before her friend Monna Ginevra and dropped them to her sides—"Tears of Madonna! How can you hope for good peddling with three such gauds in your pack? Must I hawk them in the Mercato; or have a booth at the Impruneta for the fair? No, no. They must wear the drab gowns. I

always told my master how it would be. Six boys right off, if you please! What are you to make of that? His luck must

IN THE MARKET PLACE, FLORENCE.

change—and so I told him. Good Easter to all of us! He's learned his lesson now."

Her one grief she has borne with stoic philosophy. Tears and wailing are no indication of anguish in the Donna Bertas of this practical world. These are the due of the dead, as

much their due as masses or a watched cold night in the Guardamorto. No, her real sorrow is always with her, buried deep in household cares together with her real affection and great store of Christian kindness. She hides it indeed, as her man hides his—but they share it, it is a bond uniting this old-world pair. Romualdo, their first-born, their hope and pride, has broken away, shocked all traditions, violated all the unwritten laws of family. God knows where he may be now—robbing and reiving with Uguccione della Faggiuola, the wild Aretine; dicing in Milan, lying with bad women in the brothels of Bologna, or (it may well be) hiding for his life, a gaunt, peering scarecrow, hunted and starving, in the stony hills of Romagna. It is a story so terrible, a disgrace so severe that Donna Berta and Ser Martino never speak his name. They go as near as they can. If Ser Martino mentions Uguccione, the dread captain, Donna Berta is all ears. If it is Visconti of Milan who is blocking all the roads from the north, she will bring the talk round to the mule-train overdue, and Ser Martino will satisfy her. In these times of everlasting war not a week passes but prisoners are brought in by one of the gates, chains round their necks, dry blood and dry mud upon their faces, their rags dropping about them, and are pushed forward at the pike's point to their shame in the Piazza Signoria. There they have to kneel in turn and kiss the tail of the Marzocco at the root. You may be sure Ser Martino scans every trapped face of them. And Donna Berta knows by a glance at his stolid eyes whether she may breathe till to-morrow.

Time softens all; and it is many years now since Romualdo went off with the French horsemen and never came back. But the heart knows its own terror, and when war is rife the fear comes back. Happily one's other sons are a stay and comfort. Bertuccio is with his father in the shop, a grave, dark-chinned young man. Corradino is with the Peruzzi in London, and one hears of him once a year when the convoy

comes in from Genoa. Bonventuro is in minor orders—one could never keep him from the priests; Serafino serves the altar at the Carmelite church; and Arcagnolo is a baby, as stiff as a carrot in his swaddling bands.

As for Ser Martino himself, do you desire to see his patient, wise, far-seeing blue eyes, his hanging chaps, his creased hands, which he is so fond of hiding in the sleeves of his gown? You may see him still, or as he was in 1350; or again in 1450, when Ghirlandajo coloured him to the life in the choir of Santa Maria. Brave old Ser Martino, red-gowned, far-sighted, patient, and as rigid as a rock. He is hard to be found in Florence o' these days—though he is still there—but his works endure. He built the Duomo, and Santa Croce for the Frati; above all, he built Orsammichele, the church with a granary on the top, and had it made as fair as a church could be, in honour of a miraculous Virgin—grumbling all the time. When they asked him, should there not be a picture for the altar of Saint Anne—a *sacra conversazione?* "Chè, chè!" cried he testily; "don't talk to me of sacred conversations. Look at the price of wool!" But he gave way—he always did when the glory of that church was involved; if in the faint hope that Madonna would bring home Romualdo, or if to indulge Donna Berta's hope, are you going to blame him?

Not that he was a religious man, but he regarded religious decorum as an asset. He had a scoffing way with him, which no one found amiss. One day he went with his wife to that miracle of the Ascension. It was done in the Piazza Santa Croce, under a great tent-roof of blue, stuck with tinsel stars. Upon a tribune surrounded by woolly clouds sat God Almighty with little frizzed seraphim all about Him. On one side of the throne was Madonna, on the other Santa Chiara and San Francesco. The Spirito Santo, a real pigeon, was tied by the leg to the back of the throne, for fear it should take fright and fly away. Gesù had to be swung up on cords to this glorious place, and up he went. But there was some hitch—or the

ropes had swelled with the late rains. He went up, indeed, but most slowly. "Chè! Chè," says Ser Martino to his wife, "let us hope the Signore went up faster than that, otherwise He is not there yet." Everybody heard him and laughed.

You would not say that such a man was a warrior, and yet he would fight for an idea or a trifle—as you might call it. There was the war with Pisa—that is a good example—the war for the Pandects; for it was nothing else. They are of the seventh century at latest,—but how did Ser Martino know this? Hopeless to study the Roman law without them; but what did Ser Martino know, or what care had he of the Roman law? No matter; he knew these things. He said in open assembly, "I am for atrocious war. Burn Pisa level with the ground, but save the Pandects." And when with great pomp they were escorted into Florence, exposed in the Duomo, offered upon the altar, and a guard set night and day about the old yellow sheets, Ser Martino went down the Calimala slapping his purse, "and," said he, "this day we have harvested a thousandfold of our blood and gold." Strange old shrewd trader! You may say that is the last thing to call him, but you are wrong. He could calculate nicelier than we, that's all. For he knew the money equivalent of renown, beauty, dignity, proper pride, antiquity, and the like—shadowy things to which we assign no face value. But Ser Martino could and did.[1]

[1] Here is a good note which shows how the more lettered descendants of Ser Martino passed their days in the Quattrocento:—"Now I am ready to satisfy that curiosity of yours which makes you demand how I disport myself in this my villa of Lecore, how I make through the days of summer, and what are my literary delights. I rise betimes and, in my long bed-gown, stroll the gardens, whence having delighted in the fresh morning air, I withdraw to my study, turn over some poet or another, work at the precepts of Quintilian, or read (not without stupefaction) the orations of Cicero. I revel in the Epistles of Pliny, which are my delight, compose now and then an epigram, but more pleasurably elegiacs. After dinner I sleep for a while, and my father who is with me here, given over as he is to the amenities of letters, corrects, adds to, readjusts my compositions,

where they may be faulty; and after my nap chess claims me or backgammon [*Tavola reale*, is, I think, backgammon]. Attached to the villa we have a vineyard of good size, full of fruit, through the midst of which runs a brook of the freshest water. Here are a multitude of fishes, great and small; here the hedges are of densest shade; the nightingales day and night complain, singing yet of their ancient hurts. Here, too, I read some good author; and next, with my lute on my knee, I sing some improvised verse or another, and sometimes a more studied music. After sunset I go to *pallone* [a magnificent game]. So I will spend my summer unless the plague in town be stayed; nor shall I till my fields, being so well occupied with the furrows of my mind. You see that I have no Sassetti library of treasures, nor any Medicean; but I have a little shelf of well-written books which is more to me than the greatest storehouse in the world. Farewell."

Is not that a pretty picture? This man's father, mind you, would be a Ser Martino; and a Ser Martino himself would this man grow to be. The Florentine, wiser than our Englishman, was the better actuary; for he could estimate the value of the Humanities as certainly not less, and probably a good deal higher than that of the Mundanities.

THE BRIDGES, FLORENCE.

CHAPTER IX

THE MUGELLO—FIESOLE TO FAENZA—FORLI TO FLORENCE

Quidity of the region.

THE Mugello is more than a watershed for Lamone and Sieve, Santerno and Bisenzio; in the old days Tuscany marched with Romagna along its edge, and in days yet more remote, it was the famous lurking-place of the Ubertini and Uberti, land-pirates all, of which two clans, Florence broke the spirit of one, and the other broke Arezzo's. To cross and recross it you must twice surmount the "Gran' giogo," which poor Buonconte had cause to remember in his grave. You will travel good roads, breathe superlative air, see a pleasant people, and gain great horizons. If these are not reasons enough to invite the reader, they were reasons enough for me. On the 21st of May, being the vigil of Pentecost, I drove from Florence to Fiesole, meaning to be over the Casaglia Pass before I was two days older.

Cities, as we know, *habent sua fata*. Neither peace, nor the straw-plaiting industry, nor the electric tramway, nor universal conscription has made Fiesole more humane. The piazza was all a scurry of litter, and chickens, and country omnibuses; the boys pursued me with stones and savage yells; the fierce-eyed girls glowered at me from under the pents of their towzled hair; matrons, secure from all curiosity, continued to smack their children's posteriors whether I drove out with two horses or two-and-twenty. And the aspect of the town! Could any little place be so close to a great one and borrow so little from it? How harsh a tower! What a chill upon the windy streets! Good limewash is in all; and yet in Fiesole it takes a cold tone, where in Florence and Pistoja it seems to be incandescent—as if the sun, having soaked it for centuries, had saturated it, until his light was rayed forth like heat from hot iron. Withal, a town superbly placed: fine as it is from across the valley, it is perhaps finer from behind. Beyond it, in a cypress wood, the road forks, and, taking the left to go to Borgo San Lorenzo, you will find that it winds round the outside face of a steep hill, and gives you a new Fiesole, gleaming white now between its two rocks and their citadels, and the

Crude Fiesole.

Arno valley beyond it, sheeted in mist, looking like a sea at dawn.

Much up-and-down work ensues over a bad road. You pass Poggiolo with a weir and a mill.

Borgo San Lorenzo.

Monte Senario, a respectable mountain, is upon your left, with rocks and light oak scrub half-way up his height; behind him is Monte Morello, a greater than he. Hereabouts a tributary of the Sieve has birth; one asks its name. "Qui si chiama il fosso," was the answer I got. "It calls itself the ditch hereabouts." This is what Dante called the Arno—a *sventurata fossa*, but I think Poggiolo's stream was named in affection. You lurch and roll onwards over an accursed road—which is drained by the simple plan of having dykes cut across it—until you touch the good metal of the valley, and see within a rampart of rocky hills the Sieve racing south, and Borgo San Lorenzo packed about it—walled, bridged, and gated, with one fine red tower high above the houses. This is just the snug, enclosed valley which the painters loved for their mysteries. Here the Three Holy Kings adored, Saint Jerome held converse with his lion, or Saint Austin, in an airy chamber, wrote of the City of God, attended by a partridge. It is the place in every particular. Here are the light green plateaus, here the ribbony river with

thin trees about it, each with its tuft of feathers; there, far off, is the bell-tower; and there from the city gate issues a train of mules which might very well carry the offerings of Gaspar, Melchior, and Balthasar.

It is a crowded little market town full of evidence of a wild ancestry. Many a smithy has embedded in its walls the stump of some lord's tower; as for the Pretorio, it is a fortress, covered with the shields of Podestàs—Florentine to a man. The concentric rings of Degli Albizzi are there, Ruccellai, Puccini, Di Betto; and then comes, to tell the end of the tale, Cosm. Med. Mag. Dux Etruriæ. The belfry is machicolated, as if it had been intended for the last refuge of the citizens. Also, it is of strange construction, having being commenced as a dodecagon, but finished otherwise. It seems that they built the hexagon, and then, patience or bricks failing, closed it off with one straight line. It is therefore a heptagon, and it is absolutely impossible of access. I was never so baffled by a church tower but once, and that was when I saw Sant' Egidio's from the Piazza at Milan, and behold it was very good. A dozen times I prowled about that place, but could never reach the tower. I found out afterwards that it had been built into the post office. Here I was in the

same quandary, save that I was able to fall back upon the church itself, which is very accessible, but suffers from the common Tuscan vice (which afflicts the Duomo of Florence)—the vice, I mean, of disproportion. It is a world too wide for its height, and does not appear to have even that which it has. Otherwise it is perfectly uninteresting, yet does not fail of beggars at its doors with long petitions to your charity, nor of veiled women who pray in its shady corners all the forenoon.

A scorching white lane, past the school (where I heard children chanting their lessons to the *brindisi* in *Lucrezia Borgia*), takes the voyager to a ruined cloister and church of *frati*. I should rather have said that it will take him thither if he have my sympathy for a dead sanctuary. It has always seemed to me much more touching than a dead man. For our brother's corpse will show traces of the grime in which now and again every one of us will wallow; but there is no wasted feature of a church's but marks where some Magdalen's pot of ointment was poured. With his own body a man will use familiarity, as when he soaks it in drink; indignity compunges him not—the thing is his own. But no shameful handling may come near a church; a man may not enter it with covered

Bare ruined choirs.

head—it is the house of God. What he puts into

FIESOLE.

it is for splendour and honour. You will always find there the best he has had to give. And to

see that abandoned to the owl, the bat, and the wood-louse—discarded like a broken toy—is to be moved; at least it moves me. The case is at its worst when, as here, the original building was flimsy to death, thin and poor—no doubt the best its contrivers could attain unto, but deplorable always, and in death most pitiful. This is not a tragic ruin at all—as the spectacle is of murdered Glastonbury; it is as it would be to see a butterfly crushed on the road-side. The roofless church, made of rubble and plaster, is choked with nettles, which indeed, with the ramping ivy above, actually hold together what they desecrate, and preserve it for more lasting dishonour. You can trace the apse, the pillars of the high altar are there, the raised floor of the sanctuary where the daily miracle used to be done before bowed heads and (in the case of women) beating hearts. Now it is full of hay. Once there were frescoes over all; untidy heaps by the walls show now where the plaster has been raked together as it fell. Looked at in the large, I suspect that all great Italy is in the way with this poor place.

The Pass, Marradi.

The hills on each side of the Casaglia Pass are entirely sterile: although the mountain tops are crowned with crosses it is most certain they bear nothing else. Bald and red brown, curve after curve of shadeless

road has to be climbed ; and the only interest the traveller can have is to observe the stratification. The Apennines of the Mugello are built up of slabs of rock so thin that they seem artificial, as if made of those fine Roman bricks one finds in old walls in the Campagna. Between the strata is a reddish-clay, not nourishing by all the evidence, for hardly anything grows. The river trickles languidly over slabbed rocks, much as Hermitage Water does in naked Liddesdale. At the summit you reach an altitude of 3200 feet and a great mountain prospect. The descent is rapid, through two brown villages, Cantino and Palazzuolo, and along the course of the Lamone, which will take you to Faenza and the Adriatic. Near Palazzuolo I saw a picture by Salvator Rosa : a high rock and a pine above the eddying river—boys and big-headed sheep crowded upon it—waist-deep in the water, naked shepherds dipping the animals. These were pitched bodily down and soused and soused again. They swam easily, both sheep and lambs, hounded on to further exertions by the yelling boys ; but the scene was uncommonly like the Inferno.

> Non altrimenti i cuochi a' lor vassalli
> Fanno attuffare in mezzo la caldaja
> La carne cogli uncin', perche non galli.

Just so the demons on the rock goaded the

demons in the water, and the sheep were soused. I saw Cagnazzo at it, and Libicocco, and tusked Ciriatto, Graffiacane and rabid Rubicant—all the devilish pack. And so to Marradi.

Marradi—with a short penultimate—is a little paved town, built of clay-coloured stone, with remains of fine old houses in many a street. The Albergo La Pace was one, where I ate at noon. The forecourt had been turned into a coach-house, the gallery had gone; but every doorway was deeply carved, the fireplaces were enormous, all moulded; and in a recess in the kitchen was a Madonna in *gesso*, who had once been coloured in the Ferrarese fashion. First sign that I was near Romagna—my landlady. A swarthy, deep-breasted, heavy woman, very handsome, and very like a cow, she was the type of all the goddesses you see painted in the cities of the Po; but, as a fact, Marradi is in Tuscany, though Brisighella, some twelve miles on, is not. It is a place strong by nature. Guido Novello had it for the Ghibellines of Romagna in the thirteenth century, and after him and his the Manfredi of Faenza; but in 1440 the Florentines were in possession, and the Snake of Milan sent Piccinnino to try the entry into Tuscany that way.

His intention had been to take the pass of San Benedetto, which is on the road from Forlì; but

the Florentine had a good man posted there, Niccolò da Pisa, with whom the dwarf had tried a fall before—to his detriment. He gave up that plan, therefore, in favour of the Casaglia (whence I have just brought you), and the more readily seeing that Bartolommeo Orlandini had the charge of it, down here at Marradi, upon whom and his post he reasoned thus, if we may trust Machiavelli. Said he to himself, "Marradi is a castle at the foot of the mountains which divide Tuscany from Romagna, but it looks towards Romagna and is at the foot of the Val di Lamone. And although it has no walls, the river, the hills, and the people of it make it a stronghold; for its men are armigerous and loyal, the river, eating into the earth, has such high banks that to enter the valley that way would be out of the question, should but one foot-bridge be manned against us; and as for the mountains, the bluffs are so steep that their posts would be unassailable. Nevertheless the cowardice of Messer Bartolommeo has made those brave men cowards, and his weakness those positions weak." And the truth is that no sooner did this Bartolommeo hear rumours of an enemy on the march than, leaving everything to take care of itself, he fled with all his people, and never drew a breath till he was safely in Borgo San Lorenzo. But though a better man

was at hand to save Florence — Baldaccio d' Anghiori—to drive Piccinnino into the hills and win back Marradi, it is history that Cosimo P. P. made Orlandini gonfalonier, less than a year after he had shown himself most vile. *Cosa vuole? È la politica!* as a wise man of Siena said once, when a *fantino* was killed running the Palio.

We leave Marradi for the shore, with the salt gale of the Adriatic blowing in our faces. The frontier towers increase—infallible sign that we are in the march of two countries. Many of them watch the Val di Lamone from hills which are coloured like *Bizarre* tulips—striped grey and yellow and black. Torrential rains which comb them yearly, equatorial suns which bake them after, burnt grass and black junipers, produce this wild effect. But the hills run down very fast as the Lamone buries itself deep in marl. Almost in the open country, at last you see on a cliff to the east a fierce little place, with a castle on a hill, and a chapel perched on a needle of rock—just as Saint Michel d' Aiguille at Le Puy; and here is Brisighella which was once held by the Lady of Forlì and Imola, the fair virago Catherine. It has just occurred to me that Brisighella, the typical clown of the Comedy of Masks, got his name from this place, which, with its cypresses, round towers, terraces, arcades,

Brisighella, the Plain.

and round-arched churches is as little like a

VILLA GELSOMINO, FIESOLE.

Tuscan town as well may be. I remember a great old pale brick church, in shape a Latin

cross, with an octagonal lantern or domicule atop, very august, but marred by a chocolate plaster façade. I remember that the canons were singing the vespers of Pentecost through their noses, and how they maddened the fine young organist they had. How he crashed in the stops and laboured at the pedal as he tried to make them go! Poor old yawning souls, they singularly lacked enthusiasm. The hour for the Descent of Tongues was past; nothing but endless sleep could comfort them. When the office was done the young organist banged down the front of his instrument, snatched at his hat, and raced out of church. I never saw a man in such a hurry. As for the old canons they went on without him—and even made a better job of it. There was less discord. The church is whitewashed inside.

After Faenza, the Via Emilia and Forlì, of which, as not proper to this narrative, I omit all account, you accost the hills again at Terra del Sole on your return journey. It is one of many outposts of the Lady's of Forlì—a battlemented, close-gated place, dark as twilight within its narrow streets, and, being itself a fortress, without any *rocca* above it. Two miles beyond is Castrocaro, with a very strong *fortezza* on the cliff; six miles more and you reach

To Rocca San Casciano.

Dovadola, a third embattled town, larger and more ornate than the others, with two bridges, a castle, and many churches to its credit. These and the many more upon the ridges of the hills the gallant, yellow-haired Lady of Forlì—who looked like a Madonna and was a Semiramis—must needs see fall from her one after another, as she bit her nails upon her tower, looking for Sforza's and seeing nothing but Cæsar Borgia's host. A great-hearted woman she was in an age of great women. She might have been another Catherine, indeed, in Russia, another Elizabeth in England, a stronger (though no less desirous) Mary of Scotland. As it was, she had many lands but could not hold them, many husbands but could get no worthy children, until Giovanni de' Medici took her in the end and begat Giovanni delle Bande Nere, who begat Cosimo Primo, a man in all respects worthy of his grand parentage, in whom Catherine lived again.

Rocca San Casciano, a town of moderate ascension, is geographically in Romagna, but politically in Tuscany. Oddly enough it was one of the first communes to be acquired by the Florentines, and certainly the first, if not also the last, to be acquired by the peaceful channels of a notary. This is how they got it. A certain Count Francesco di Paoluccio da Calboli, being

lord of it and the whole country side, dying in 1382, made the Republic his universal heir by last will and testament duly proved and administered. Florence stepped into his shoes, and never stepped out again. Such is its uneventful history. It does not materially differ from such towns as we have seen in the valley of the Lamone. It is bigger than Borgo San Lorenzo, closely built about the Montone, which makes a circular sweep just here, has two bridges and a ruined fortress in the hill side. Hemmed in as it is by the mountains, and packed with people, I found it abominably hot. Its inn—I think the *Rosa*—is hospitable, but dirty; its landlord a patriarch in appearance and in fact. It is to be known of him that he has a family of twelve children, all alive, of whom seven are virgin daughters at home, intent upon the service of the house, all pretty, with hair like goddesses and the persons of nymphs; and the other five sons, all but one out in the world. Their names in order are as follows: Minotti, Domenico, Luisa, Telemaco, Teresa, Lucia, Aldina, Annina, Bruno, Socrate—who is very properly at school—Gina, Ines. The name of *la mamma* is Margherita, and of *il babbo*—Napoleone! If that is not as it should be, then the world is awry. The Napoleon of the bride-chamber is he, and a fine fellow, every

inch a man. It was Lucia who supplied me with these facts; for she, Aldina, Gina and Ines waited at table. Annina was being courted by a lieutenant of Artillery and devoted herself to his comfort while he dined. Teresa was chambermaid, and Luisa in the kitchen. *La Mamma*, as she merited, sat about knitting stockings. I saw Gina do an unusual service to her goldfish. She took them out of their bowl by the tail, washed them with soap and water, dried them, and put them back. She said it was good for them; but I doubt it—and so, profoundly, I think did they. The military flocked to the house at dinner time, and absorbed as many of the young ladies of it as they could. I am not at all surprised: they were charming.

From Portico to the Pass.

Portico, a steeply-built town, using every peak and table of rock on either side to make its defences sure, has a gateway with a loggia above it, finely arcaded and adorned in the midst with a great plaque of faience. The tower of its citadel is square and intact—and that is all I know about it, save that it is set like a jewel in a beautifully coloured case. For the hills round about it are of deep red marl; in terraces are set the bright green vines; and the river, running strongly here, is like translucent verdigris. No jade is of so splendid a green.

After this you must climb in good earnest. You go through San Benedetto in Alpi—a village which Dante knew—it is all on a severe grade, and a forlorn little place enough—tortured out of all comfortable hue or semblance by the great winds, the rain-storms, snow-storms, and hail-storms of these high levels. Yet San Benedetto breeds poets—of whom I know one alive at this hour, a girl not more than eighteen years old. This child, taken from shepherding on the steep crags to be *serva* to some friends of mine, English people, was by them in due course removed to London. Here, being profoundly moved by what she saw and heard, she kept a diary, which her mistress was allowed to see. I too was allowed. There were some touching things in it—simple, artless, homely things, of course, the fancies of a fanciful child who has become articulate. It was extraordinary reading, too, not so much for what she had observed as for the force of her comparisons. San Benedetto and London! But the road claims me, and the Muraglione Pass—a road superbly engineered and admirably maintained, rising by sharp turns and long curves to a height of 907 *metri*, and protected from the wind at the top by a prodigious wall (whence its name of Muraglione—the big wall). A stone upon this commemorates the

virtues of its maker and the road's, that Grand Duke Leopold II. who, the reader may remember, slept in my bed at Fivizzano in the Garfagnana. I hope he sleeps peacefully now, for he laboured with piety while he lived, and is remembered with gratitude by all who love Tuscany.

From the plateau of the summit you will have the whole panorama of the Apennines, practically all, from Gubbio to Carrara. You have Falterona, pregnant with rivers, almost in the sun's eye at noon; behind him Pratomagno with a cloud upon his head; to the east the "gran' giogo," a magnificently rocky edge; far into the west are Abetone, Le Tre Potenze, Monte Cimone (finest of them all), the Garfagnana, the way of Modena. Much snow still lay on Abetone when I was there; a streak or two upon Falterona, which, *con rispelto parlando*, looks no bigger than Ettrick Pen. Yet from one flank of him flows the Tiber, and Arno from another. Far below one's feet lies San Godenzo, the only home of men to be seen. To that steep little town, which is all on a slide of rock, and has a Byzantine church, came Dante as an exile with others of his faction to make a bond with Ugolino di Felicione Ubaldini—lord of the land—defensive and

The Pass to the Arno, San Godenzo, Dicornano.

offensive, against the Neri. It was, indeed, in this very church, Byzantine in appearance, with a bare brick façade and a brick tower, that the banished Cerchi faction met, and here they signed their bond. From thence, as I suppose, the greatest of the Florentines took the road by which I have brought you, and went into Romagna.

Dicomano, with arcaded streets and a broad piazza, conducts the Sieve to the bed of the Montone; thence by a valley of extraordinary fruitfulness the wedded pair hasten on to the Arno. They reach it at Pontassieve, as the reader knows.

CHAPTER X

CONCERNING THE THEORY THAT THE WORLD IS A GARDEN

The Renaissance in Italy, so called, whether it was a miracle or a process, is a thing which cannot be denied, especially in Tuscany, and more especially in this state of Florence. In itself a formula, it can be reduced to any other kind of formula the reader may prefer. Somebody has called it the Discovery of Man; somebody else, the Return to Antiquity; somebody with more fancy than sense, the Return to Nature, which was surely the last thing it was. Personally, I prefer to call it the result of accepting the theory, that this world is a garden; and it seems better to treat of the growth, development, and maturing of this notion in a semi-fabulous form.

The Renaissance—what?

And yet, in a sense, there is much to be said for that particular formula which reduces the whole affair to a return to the manners and

expressions of ancient Greece and ancient Rome. Ancient Greece, no doubt, was what the Italians of the *Quattrocento* aimed at—and it suits us, sentimentalists as we are (to whom the unknown only is magnificent), to believe that ancient Greece is what they achieved. But the fact is that those Italians knew less about the Greeks than we do, and could only get at them through Roman means—which is, or seems, if seen at the right moment, uncommonly near. A ready test is afforded by a well-chosen lodging and an early awaking. Lean out of your window at the dawn of some April day, see the buildings in the shadowless calm, as white as agate—how spacious, how disposed, how serene they stand. Not like the Gothic of Germany or France, of grey and crumbling stone; not spearing up to heaven in pinnacles and finials, in spires and long shafts, not clumped together so that height may seem higher, nor narrowed, nor shortened that length or width may preponderate. These corniced palaces or pedimented churches know nothing and ask nothing better than the Earth; and their edges are as clean as the day they were quarried up at Carrara. They express a lowly, but a dignified, an exact perfection of their own kind. They will not aid your hysterics or ecstasies; but they will soothe and strengthen you; perhaps they

will cajole you into thinking that Man is a more majestic being than you have any ground for

IN THE BOBOLI GARDEN, FLORENCE.

supposing, and this world a more abiding city. Well, this is the classic feeling—certainly the

feeling of old Rome—which the Tuscans have caught.

The sun comes up, the gold strikes fire upon the brazen cross, upon the yellowed marble, upon the hot tiles of dome and loggia. The statues upon the cornice show burning white, bitten into an air of radiant blue. Not a blue sky such as we may have, but an air circumambient and dyed with blue. Pediment and frieze and corniced statues bathe in this blue, and through it you see them raying their white fire. It is very difficult to believe that a people who live in such an air and have dipped such things in it, have not felt a breath from the Acropolis, or have not sensed the violet crown. And perhaps they have; but that does not express the whole of their Renaissance. Let me pursue my fable.

God Almighty, as we all know, planted the world first as a garden, declared Himself, with every reason, to be Lord of it, and set man therein to be gardener. Gardener, then, man was, to the satisfaction of himself and his fellow-creatures, until things fell out as they did, not at all according to the benevolent design and intention of God. From the time when He degraded Adam from his office and destroyed the garden which He had

The garden lost.

made, to that at which the world was for a second time discovered by man to be such, is (according to the computation of Archbishop Ussher and others) five thousand two hundred and ninety-four years eight months and thirteen days—a period of many occurrences with which we need concern ourselves but slightly. The point for present consideration is, How came it about that certain Italians and their disciples and adherents, after so long an interval, made such an abrupt discovery as that the world was precisely what God had declined to continue it, and—more surprising still—that man was now lord of the garden, and God Almighty the gardener? The person to whom the enunciation of these two propositions is generally attributed was one Giovanni Boccaccio, a clergyman—but mistakenly, I think, in the case of the first of them. For it was a poet, Francesco Bernardone of Assisi, who declared, living and dying, that the world was a garden. A proof of this is that, after his death, certain little flowers of his were collected, dried and pressed, and a *Hortus siccus* of them presented to a grateful world by his followers, under the general title of *Fioretti di San Francesco*. Here and there these are still cherished. Before his time the world was supposed covered in, to keep the air out; it was, in fact, considered to be a

Foundling Hospital, with a crêche attached, where the Virgin Mary was wet-nurse, and our Saviour dry-nurse. The Father of all was seldom there. He was much engaged in warfare with an obdurate and resourceful enemy; campaign had succeeded campaign with varying fortunes ever since the time of closing the original garden. The Foundling and crêche had been instituted by Saint Paul; and the Pope of Rome for the time being was visitor and deputy-warden.

The great system of rewards and punishments which obtained in this institution, as the world was considered to be, worked for the most part remarkably well. It was, indeed, difficult for the children to go wrong. There were so many governors and governesses, tutors and preceptors, and the system of confession of faults so absolute. Moreover, the punishment of disobedient, careless, dirty or idle children was at all times exemplary and severe. Either they were deprived of their supper until they had promised amendment, or (if incorrigible) condemned to a Black Hole in perpetuity; or (if time pressed) they were turned summarily out of the crêche and into the desert passages and empty courts of the Institution, whence (it may be feared) they drifted into the butteries, kitchens, larders, or even into parts of the house where promiscuity and depraved

company completed the ruin which their first sin had begun. If this unhappily proved to be the case, they were usually handed over to the enemy on an exchange of prisoners, or they were put to

IN THE BOBOLI, FLORENCE.

picket or sentry duty, and frequently perished, as might have been expected.

Such having been the common theory of the polity and economy of this planet from the times of Saint Paul to the thirteenth century after him, it may be imagined how

Rediscovered.

great was the astonishment of Pope Innocent the Third, deputy-warden (in his turn) of the Foundling and crêche, when he understood Francesco Bernardone to declare that the world was nothing of the sort, and that consequently that same Pope Innocent was not at all what he pretended to be, but rather was, if anything, a kind of head gardener, or president of the central parterre to which all the others, which were or should be in the garden, would naturally conform. Here, you see, the rediscovery is announced unequivocally. Bernardone declared precisely that the world had no covering at all except heaven, and could not possibly need any better, since God loved everything which He had made. He went on, with unfaltering logic, to proclaim that the sun was his brother, the water his sister, and that God, being indubitably Father of him, was therefore their Father. When it was objected that the sun and the water, as immortal natures, were not visited by death (which came into the world through man's first sin), whereas man was, Bernardone replied by saying, But death also is our sister. He went on to preach broadcast over the world that it was still what it had always been, a garden —a place formed for happiness, a place of extraordinary beauty and delight; and he crowned all by saying that man was neither owner nor

gardener, but actually one of the first flowers in it. Here, I think, we may put our finger upon the

ON THE WAY TO POGGIO REALE.

fruiting bud in the rod of his argument whence Giovanni Boccaccio caused a huge branch to be reared, a branch which, in a short course of time,

entirely out-topped and overshadowed the main stem of the thesis. It is worth while seeing how this came about.

Mankind was at first enchanted to learn that it partook of the beautiful nature of flowers. Men laughed, sang, ran about naked, embraced their brothers and sisters, enjoyed diseases, wounds, famines, torments, the pains of death. They formed themselves into innumerable societies, which they were pleased to call parterres, and to pretend made upon the pattern of the central parterre—over which presided, as I told you, Pope Innocent the Third, or some successor of his. Colleges and convents of barefoot friars, nunneries, confraternities, guilds, chantries, companies of Flagellants, Cathari, Paterini, Fratres Gaudentes, and half a hundred more, sprang up all over the world, undeterred by pains or penalties of any sort. The old punishments lost their effect, since men believed that God loved them; and some, indeed, went so far as to say that if all creatures formed by Him were our brothers, then Judas Iscariot, Pontius Pilate, King Pharaoh, King Nebuchadnezzar, and the devil could be of no more remote kindred. The service of the central parterre—that is, the Catholic Church—which had once been all in all, was now largely neglected in

favour of that of the Friars Minor, Friars Preacher, and Austin Friars. These churches

THE HILLSIDE, FLORENCE.

were, as you may say, small parterres in the garden; smaller still were the oratories; but

all were very small, because, according to Bernardone, God (as Lord of the garden) was always in it, and much more likely to be among His wild flowers—the wind and water, mountains and hills, trees and grasses—than in close-covered little chapels built by men's hands. And this state of things, rife enough at Bernardone's death, became tenfold more rife after it. He was canonised as St. Francis of Assisi within the year, and, as his memory increased, there seemed no bounds to the adoration of his disciples.

The Theorists.

But there were two parties upon the death of St. Francis—for so we shall now call him—whose tenets diverged into broad, independent paths of opinion. Both agreed that the world was a garden of delight; the difference did not lie in any proposition so fundamental. The first of these, whom we will call the Literalists, maintained that mankind could only properly be called a flower in a garden when men displayed themselves in works and words suitable to the most perfect of God's creatures. Sermons were very truly flowers of mankind, philosophies, rules, counsels of perfection, hymns and lauds, spiritual exercises of all sorts. These the Literalists propagated, to continue our figure, by mixing the pollen of the old and new stocks. "Our sermons, then," said they,

"are some of the chiefest ornaments of the parterres and borders; our precepts and examples are in the same category. Now, as these flowers

VILLAS NEAR SAN MINIATO.

of ours, unlike those of our master, St. Francis (which were indeed *wild flowers*, or, in a manner of speaking, *weeds*), are half-hardy annuals, biennials, or (boasting apart) perennials, there

is no doubt but that large, walled hot-houses, which we may call the great churches, and hot-beds, or convents, will bring them forward more readily and earlier, and preserve them from the cold winds of spring, which, blowing over the garden, would shrivel them up before they had attained their full perfection. This was the argument of the Literalists.

The second party—that of the Inferentialists—did not fail to observe that their brethren were reactionaries, and actually further from the precepts of St. Francis than themselves. "These sermons of yours," they said, "which you perversely cultivate to the exclusion of the wild flowers of our master's joy, would be unrecognisable by him as flowers at all. You are not to be supposed following his congregations of straw huts by housing your own communities in great brick churches, and enclosing them with high walls. Your ceremonies of fasting and minute observances, your precepts and books of resemblances and counsels of perfection, disfigure the pleasaunce which he has found for us men. You pride yourselves upon your obedience: it is one of the letter. In spirit you are aliens."

They themselves took a different course. Because St. Francis rejoiced in his brother the

sun, they sat about in it all the early mornings, and, at noon, watched its fervent beams strike the earth from cool and leafy glades. Because St. Francis loved death they thought it no harm to give such a boon to their neighbours, and rejoiced immoderately in the decease of their wives. Because St. Francis bade them eat what was set before them, they ate it and sat still for more. They called these passive pleasures of theirs flowers in the garden of the world. Much more than that, they began to beautify themselves and their buildings very curiously; for they said, "We are the loveliest of God's creations, and shall we dishonour our divine Creator by mishandling or neglecting His delicate work?" They kept themselves sleek with unguents and paints; they slept soft, clothed themselves softly, kept themselves warm in winter, went lazily in summer. As for their houses, they made them spacious, deep in the eaves, many-windowed, having courts with fountains in the midst, and treeful gardens behind. They called painters and sculptors in to make the walls and cornices pleasant to the eye and the touch; nor did they neglect their churches.

Extreme opinions.

No doubt but they made these comely. Giotto was a man of theirs, and so were

Nicholas of Pisa and John his apprentice—to name only masters. But this also must be laid to the Inferentialists, that whether they were imagining pictures of heaven or hell, whether God and His family, or the devil and his, were of the parties they made, they never left out the garden scenes which they had been taught to observe, in which they had learned to take their inordinate pleasure; no, but Giotto would show you the birth of our Saviour in a rocky landscape under an olive tree; and while the Virgin Mary would be languidly observing the ablution of the Babe, an old goat in one corner would be scratching his ear with his hind-leg, or an ass on the other side of the mound would be braying his loudest in all the lustihood of his entire habit. And it fell out quite naturally that, as the painters and sculptors knew very much more of he-asses and he-goats, plough-teams and olive-yards, than they did of the Procession of the Holy Ghost, or the Immaculate Conception and Incarnation of the Verb, they depicted such things extremely better; and as the Inferentialists, their patrons, were in the same case, they enjoyed them extremely more. So that the goats and olive-trees, and ploughmen and he-asses encroached, and grew full-blooded in proportion as God and His angels and company retired and

showed anæmic. If Giotto had begotten a family

A CORNER, FLORENCE.

of geniuses to succeed him there is no doubt what

the pictures and sculptures would have become. But though he had many children, all ugly, none of them had genius.

Therefore when the great innovator arose, with his gospel that man was lord of the garden, and God only the gardener, the people who heard him gladly were fully prepared to believe him. He was, as I have said, a clergyman named Giovanni Boccaccio, and came from Certaldo in the Val d' Elsa. He first became notorious in Florence at the time of the great pestilence by his persistent proclamation of the beauty of the garden, and of the flowers in it, notwithstanding the fact that scores upon hundreds of men who had been walking in it in the morning, died of having done so in the evening. "No matter," said Boccaccio, "the garden appears all the more spacious to us that are left. Instead of regretting those departed weaklings, follow me, and see what a profusion of new fragrant flowers I have been finding out all over the garden. Nay, think of the dead if you will, but come, nevertheless; for just as anemones show up as red as hot blood when the snow is all about them, so is it that the pains and miseries of others enhance a thousandfold our own safety and comfort. When you are as learned as I am you will find that this truth has

Theory of Boccaccio.

been declared long ago by Lucretius, a poet of old Rome."

After the like of this talk, when he boldly preached his gospel, there was hardly any one who did not forsake all and follow him. The Literalists and Inferentialists had their painted churches to themselves—which made them highly convenient places of assignation to the new *Derivalists;* indeed, Boccaccio laughed heartily at the followers of St. Francis, and those worthy persons very soon began to be as ridiculous as he said they were; for it is perfectly well known that if you give a dog a bad name you as good as hang him.

The acceptance.

By a different road Boccaccio's friend Petrarca arrived at the same conclusion. He found out the more reasonable relationships of man and God to the garden by collecting evidence from the Greeks and Romans,—but chiefly from the latter, since, being unable to read the writing of the Greeks, he could never be sure whether he was holding their books upside down or not, and consequently was in frequent doubt as to their precise meaning. He was able, at any rate, to satisfy himself that the world had indeed been a garden long before the time of St. Francis; and he did not see how it could ever have been more nobly planned, laid out, and adorned than

Argument of Petrarca.

it had been by those celebrated peoples. He strenuously advocated a return to their system, and was of the opinion that the representations of God and the divine family which Giotto and Nicholas of Pisa, and others, had made so expressly in the image of man, could be easily adapted to the conveniency of the older religion, which, as it were, split up God into His several manifestations (male and female) and, by giving variety, induced liveliness into the religious imagination.

As for the question whether man was lord or gardener it concerned him very little ; but at any rate he himself acted as if he were lord, for he did what he chose and said what he thought (although, like his friend, he was in holy orders), being assisted thereto by Madame Laura de Sade, a French lady. The best proof of his supremacy over material things is that when she unfortunately died, he acted towards her as if she was still alive. This is a remarkable instance of the newly won dictatorship of man, and it was freely imitated by his successors. As to these it will be sufficient to remark that every philosopher, statesman, painter, poet, sculptor, and builder for five hundred years to come was avowedly a disciple of Boccaccio or of his colleague Petrarca.

Multitude of inferences.

The change in ideas has only to be stated to make plain the nature of the change. From the moment that God and man have changed places, all is done. To keep to our fable for one last moment before we drop it, these were the stages of the theory that the world was a garden. St. Francis saw it a garden of Eden, where men and the beasts, birds and fishes all played together. It was next believed a Garden Enclosed, where, within a thicket of eglantine and sweet-briar, the Holy Virgin sat still all day and looked at a Baby, and young angels waved lilies over her head, partly for her glory and partly to fan her (lest she should faint). Then Petrarca and his friends saw it an earthly paradise, Boccaccio and his said loudly, "No! it is rather a paradise of earth"—which is a very different thing. Next, man being lord, and God his creature, it was considered a dozen different kinds of garden. Some said it was a garden of simples, where secret herbs grew which gave secret knowledge, to make men still more wise and powerful than they had been. Nicholas Machiavel was one of this kind, who had no *à priori* respect for anything beautiful, precious, or rare, but subjected everything to the test of man's conveniency. Lorenzo Medicis was another of this sort, though he could not help

admiring the softness of fine turf and the gleam of women's white necks in shady groves. Near to him in opinion were that simpler sort of men—like Æneas Sylvius Piccolomini of Siena, and the poet Beccadelli, and the likes of him, who would have frankly turned the world into a garden of Armida, and disported in its deliciousness so long as their senses remained quick. There were some who, in their capacity of suzerain over God, made other gods at their pleasure. Sigismund Malatesta, Lord of Rimini, was one, who, when his mistress died, made a goddess of her, just as Cæsar, in the old days, had felt it his duty to do to the man in whose seat he sat, whom he had either murdered or tried to murder. Some made the world a grove of Academe, some put up a loggia and called it a porch. Others pretended they were Plato, but, luckily for themselves, could not reincarnate a Socrates to make them look ridiculous. In one word, given the existence of the world as a pleasure resort, God as the servant and man as the master, there was nothing which men did not feel themselves competent to do, or which they did not think open to them.

How the friar Savonarola came to say that, after all, the world was nothing of the sort, and man a degraded creature upon it urgently in need of grace; how they burned him for his

heresy; how the Emperor Charles V., with a host of Spaniards, came to show the Italians that they had been playing at life, and how those wretches went on playing at it, heedless of Martin Luther, Galileo, King Henry VIII. of England, William the Silent, Queen Elizabeth, King Louis XIV. of France, the Duke of Marlborough, Monsieur de Voltaire, Monsieur Rousseau, Dr. Johnson, the Comte de Mirabeau, the French Revolution—it boots not to say. This last convulsion drowned the garden in blood, and clogged into one glutinous mess all the Italian flowers. Then came Napoleon Buonaparte with a plough, and cut it into furrows from end to end. Most of Italy is now converted into arable. There are very few flowers left. One doubts if there are to be any more.

The theory refuted by Napoleon and others.

And this is a true parable of the Renaissance in Italy.

APPENDIX

THE ACTS OF THE RENAISSANCE

Quis prohibet ridendo dicere verum? The foregoing nonsense will be found perfectly true by whoso chooses to dig the truth out. To have put it otherwise might have taken as much space as the great work of the late Mr. Addington Symonds, who, in the embarrassment of his material, was forced to pretend

that his volumes were chapters, his chapters paragraphs, and his paragraphs sentences. The development of the fine arts upon the fundamental beliefs of the Renaissance may easily be made out. Giotto, of course, was a naturalist, and so had been Niccolò Pisano. At a long interval Donatello and Della Quercia followed them, and Piero della Francesca the Great. Giovanni Pisano, Orcagna, and the Sienese were nothing of the sort. Lorenzo Monaco began the garden-enclosed or cloister-garth theory of the world; Fra Angelico and Benozzo Gozzoli told fairy tales. Enlarging a little, running wild out of doors now and then, with a keen relish for mischief and a pronounced taste for pretty girls, came Filippo Lippi with his congeners, Lorenzo di Credi, Baldovinetti, and their similars. Botticelli was a pedant with something very much like imagination. He was perhaps the most romantic Tuscan painter, who saw his dreams very vividly, and was able to give them real expression. The fairy tale element, the fanciful and the thin, grows wearisome after this, save for the great figure of Ghirlandajo, the most typically Tuscan, the most interesting and informing, as he is the most charming, to my mind, of them all. More of him later. Roughly speaking, Giotto, Donatello, Piero della Francesca are geniuses and out of the categories. So when they came were Lionardo, the most recondite, and Michelangelo, the most devastating, of the great Tuscan artists. Lionardo was inimitable, and not imitated (in Tuscany, at least); everybody tried to do Michelangelo or Raphael, and when they copied the former they became noisy and stupid, when the latter mawkish and stupid. Genius apart, there was no good Florentine painting after Ghirlandajo. Further treatment of some of these artists will be found in the two following chapters.

CHAPTER XI

THOUGHTS IN CHURCH

At my time of life I am not going to persuade you into believing that the Florentine churches are all alike beautiful, or that more than one or two of them may be equal in interest to any part of a Norman cathedral or basilica of Lombardy or Languedoc. Happy are you if you can believe it before you go to Florence—for then of a certainty so you will find it. Happy was I, long ago, when so I also found it. I know now that their character, their specious size and proportion misled me—and finely the better I am for the knowledge. But in that great day —— good heavens! there was a new and wonderful thing at every angle of a street: a church like no other in the world. Character did that for them and for me. Then there was the mystery of association to set imagination weaving tapestries. The 'Nunziata! Beatrice might very well have walked its cloisters,

The facts and the fancies.

arm-in-arm with her girl-friends; and from that or the other pillar Dante might have watched them. There would be Guido's Vanna and Lapo's Gianna with her. One example out of many will suffice to exhibit a quality in Florentine masonry, which—in spite of everything—endures. It is not possible now to stand without awe and uplifting in any Florentine church of age. I cannot from road or railway see the solemn brown dome, its blunter counterpart on San Lorenzo, San Miniato bleached on its height, or the tufted spear of Santa Croce,[1] without the sense that I am at the gates of the City of Wonder, an eyas traveller come from afar. Nor, like Dante's pilgrim, can I refrain from my framed words—

Ridir com' ello stea—

to those who can never see the marvels revealed unto me.

But to be sober, to be just and honourable with you who are to read this book, let me state my settled opinion, that although there is character in every Florentine church, with one exception it is not good character. Character, that personal quality, that idiosyncrasy which, no doubt, you are the richer

Character.

[1] This belfry, they tell me, is new, comparatively. I don't know. It is as old as Zocchi, in any case; and if new, as good as it can be.

for possessing, be it morally bad or good—for it is surely better to have a bad character than

SANTA CROCE.

none, and, if you are a church, better to be like the Badia than the City Temple—character of a

sort is essential to a work of art. One is so apt to trip off the names of churches, and bundle themselves up into categorical pigeon-holes, that one forgets that a Norman or Perpendicular building is not to be disposed of in so many words. Nor, to take *genus* rather than *species*,

THE BADIA.

do you settle the matter by saying, Hum, Gothic; or, Hum, Byzantine; or, Pooh, Palladian.

Florentine Gothic.

Take Gothic. Gothic enough is Orsammichele, if Gothic consist in gloom, in heavy tracery, in wrought ogives and marble finials, in stained glass, cobwebs, and a vaulted ceiling. But it does not. Gothic architecture has a theory; it has bones, so to speak, upon which the *persona* of the church in question is plastered. But Orsammichele has none of the

theory, Santa Croce little or none, Santa Maria del Fiore less than usual. Real Gothic theory is to be seen near Siena, in the ruins of San Galgano; and I think the cathedral at Arezzo pretty Gothic, in the French way. But I would as soon prefer the monster at Milan as Orsammichele to Salisbury, much as I love the dust-enwrapt place.[1]

The part of the wise man.

Well, if you will allow that a bad character is better than none, you will be wise to discard the categories and take profit in what you find. Venerate, pray in, San Giovanni; admire the crimson flanks of the Duomo, the splendid poise of drum and dome, its bulk, its dignity, and its air of eld; consider the belfry as a flower of the field, how it grows; look in the Badia for the flippant, delightful monument of the Conte Ugo, who saw devils in a wood, and built this church, one of seven. Think of St. Francis in Santa Croce, and all the great dead who lie dusty there; make what you can of San Marco, which must have been Bianca Capello's parish church when she was a docile young wife

[1] You may think it worth notice—as I do—that the only Gothic art which the Tuscans took, faithfully observed, and bettered, was sculpture. Regard such a Madonna as that swaying, willowy creature above the door of the Bigallo: she is quintessential Gothic. You can find a score of them at Pisa and round about. Here, certainly, they improved upon their model without departing from it, but in architecture otherwise. The fact, of course, is that sculpture was the crowning Tuscan art.

and household drudge in seclusion. Genuinely you will see in Santo Spirito Brunelleschi's most splendid work, but you will not set foot in the Carmine—at least for architecture's sake—nor in San Firenze, San Giovannino (which M. de Brosses

PIAZZA ANNUNZIATA, FLORENCE.

thought so fine), nor in San Gaetano, unless you desire to realise the kind of deities revered by Giạn Gastone's wig. Santo Stefano and San Pier Scheraggio, if they are not venerable to you, should be; for San Pier is one of the oldest in Florence, and Santo Stefano has a black-and-

white portal through which walked the Uberti clan to wait for Buondelmonte. As for San Miniato on the hill, no more words of mine can be needed. In all I have to say here I exclude it. It is not a Florentine church, and it is superb, even now.

Wandering notes.

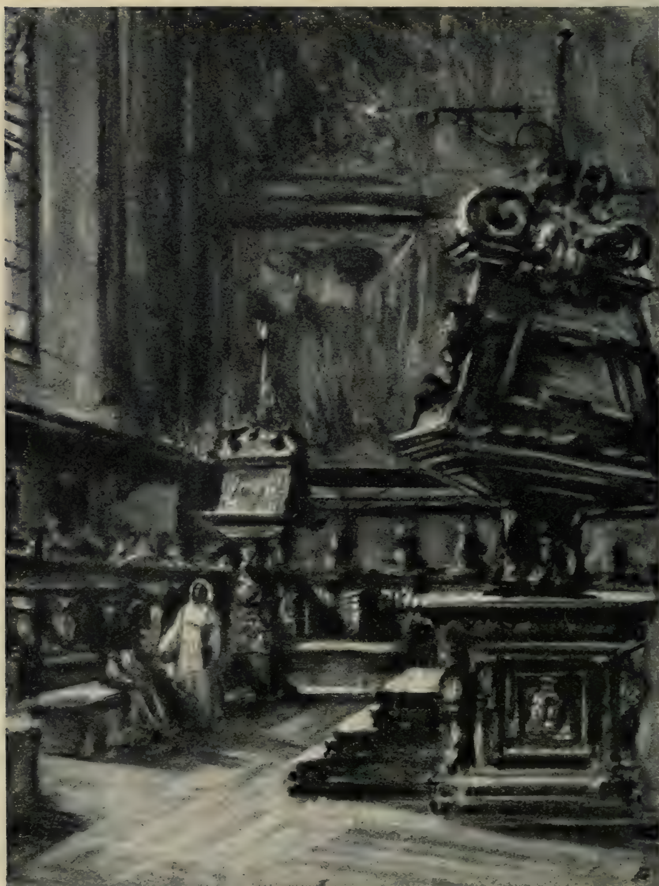
A favourite trick of my own is to stray from church to church when I am here, loitering in each, and waiting upon what thoughts may come. At such times I leave Herr Baedeker at his railway station, or in the hotel omnibus, with all his labelled wares about him.

Santa Maria Novella.

Character, for example! Where will you get a façade more bitingly personal, more bizarre, and more deeply gilded by time to a lovely hue than that of Santa Maria Novella? It must have been unspeakably hideous when Leo Battista Alberti had finished it for the Ruccellai. I remember a church at Lucca — surely San Michele—where black beasts swarm and writhe over a dead white cornice; a church of delirium, which this must have nearly resembled. But now the white plaques are like old ivory, and the black[1] is silvered with dust. Hieroglyphs, serpentine rays, quadrants, triangles, and what not, are shabby now and robbed of their sting. The

[1] Really, green.

whole mass is heaped up together at the end of the fine amphitheatre with I know not what of



CHOIR, SANTA MARIA NOVELLA.

perdurable grandeur. Mysterious symbols impose upon without insulting you. He builded

wiselier than he knew, because he never guessed how time would gloze his crudities.[1] The great Alberti! among whose virtues it was to be able to jump a horse standing.

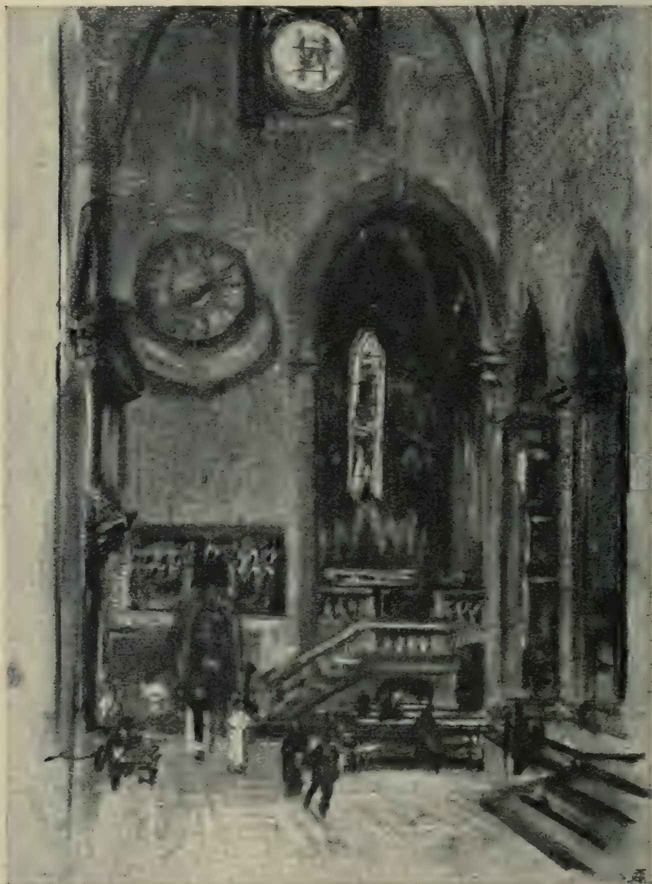
As for the within, there is but one Italian church of the kind more naked, and that is the cathedral at Orvieto; but none at all where the effect of austerity, at once strongly pursued and easily worn, is more sure. There is less fresco, there are fewer monuments than in Santa Croce: there is much more dignity. Both are, plainly, built cheap; there is brick, and bad brick, under the whitewash. Yet Santa Maria, to my eyes, does not seem to be built of cardboard, as Santa Croce does; and if it is a case of frescoes, better a live Ghirlandajo than a brace of dead (and buried) Giottos.

Laud of Ghirlandajo.

Incomparable Ghirlandajo! Shrewdest, most humorous, inexhaustiblest of painters, what should we know of the great world of Florence without thee and thy twinkling eye? Hast thou missed not one? Where hast thou scrupled to place them, in what august company of gods and demigods? Who are these frost-bitten acquaintances of our Redeemer, these hard men in red, who stand about while He suffers

[1] It is proper to say that Alberti was not answerable for the astronomical portents.

baptism or changes water into wine at Cana—who are they but Ser Luca and Ser Cosimo, and other



SANTA MARIA NOVELLA.

stout oneyers of the counting-house and Mercato Nuovo? Who are these goitred and overfed

gossips of John Baptist but Messer Filelfo and Messer Poggio and their learned compeers? And who this goateed wizard but the immortal Demetrius Calchondylas, who played at Plato, and would sooner sacrifice a bull to Zeus than fast through Lent?[1] Look over the way at these ladies. Saint Anne, Saint Elizabeth, Martha and Mary, and the other Mary, do you suppose? Never in the world—but Monna Giovanna degli Albizzi, Monna Lucrezia Tornabuoni, Monna Simonetta, Diva Fragoletta, and Ippolita Bella, sweeping and shimmering from the Ruccellai garden to that of the Riccardi. Lovely, free-bosomed, high-headed, frail, tender, silly women! Of such you were; and old Ghirlandajo, alone of his generation, saw you, saw through you, pinned you like moths to his shop-walls, and made use of you as occasion served. And not of you only—you and your husbands and your lovers, your children of the right bed and children of the wrong—but those same beds of yours, and the maids and demure boys you loved to have about them; your pots of unguent, and combs, and neck-jewels, and jewels for your foreheads; your table-cloths, pipkins, napkins, pumpkins; you and all

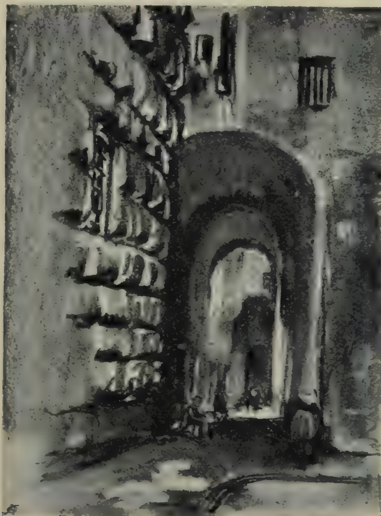
[1] Let it be recorded of Thomas Taylor, our eighteenth-century Platonist, that he actually did this thing. He induced a bull into his back parlour and sacrificed it to Zeus. It is said that there was no other way of getting it out again; but that is neither here nor there.

your gear, down to the dogs under the table and melons under the wall, the cunning, fine-fingered

ENTRANCE TO SACRISTY, SANTA CROCE.

old artificer caught and caged, and washed it all into the church walls in sweet and wholesome

colour; where it now is to this day, sweet and wholesome still. They say that he grew rich at his work, and aimed to have been richer. "Commission me the walls of the city to paint, and it



SANTO STEFANO, FLORENCE.

shall be done," he is reported. I wish to heaven he had done it.

There is no truer painter, in the right sense of the word, than Ghirlandajo, the most Flemish of the Florentines, who learned more than any other of them of what Van der Goes had to tell him.[1] I remember that Mr. Ruskin, and I have

[1] As to this, see his "Nativity" in the Accademia, which is a copy or Hugo's hospital triptych.

no doubt that Mr. Berenson, denies him ability; but really, I ask myself, what can you have from an artist which he can't give you? Character? It is in every line. Knowledge? What play or circumstance of life was hidden from him? Beauty? Observe his women and choir boys. Decorative power? If you are in the Ruccellai chapel you have but to look about you, and consider whether such warmth, breadth, and depth of tone was attainable elsewhere in a school where such qualities were never directly aimed at.[1]

Santa Croce.

Cross the city from west to east, from what was once a slum to what is a slum still, and you will find the other Mendicants' church. Outside the gates, with the suspects, the exiles, the vicious for hire and their ruffians, those first Poor Men of God were content to be

[1] I have said my say about the Spanish chapel already in *Earthwork out of Tuscany*. It was over-painted by the original artist, whoever he was, and has been super-painted again by some rightly nameless modern. Personally, I don't care for the wall which shows the Duomo bright pink and has a so-called portrait of Petrarch. In fact, I like it as little as I do that sugar-baker *par excellence* himself. But I do consider the tabular statement of the Virtues good decoration and good drawing, and remarkably tough theology. It illustrates in an extraordinary way that vision of the great doctors of the Church in the 10th Paradiso, whom St. Thomas describes sitting and burning apart, from Gratian to Sigier,

> Che, leggendo nel vico degli strami,
> Sillogizzò' invidiosi veri.

I will warrant he did; and the more invidious his truths the more strenuously would he have syllogized.

—and so it was all the world over.[1] Santa

SANTA CROCE, FLORENCE.

Croce, outside like a barn—an honest barn of

[1] All the Mendicant convents in England were built outside the city gates, and (for choice) near the gaol.

snuff-coloured brick—inside is like a shed, with

SANTA CROCE, FLORENCE.

skeleton columns, and broad arches too thin to bear the great thrust, a raftered roof and a floor

of red tile. Many of these austerities cause dis-

SANTA CROCE, FLORENCE.

comfort. The church is overweening wide—and here are these cardboard arches to hold it all!

Such glory as it has of its original merit is to be seen in the blush of glass and fresco in the choir; and of supererogatory grace it has more than enough, seeing that it has pleased the Florentine State from a sufficiently early day to stuff it with the monuments of more or less eminent persons. *Guarda e passa,* say I: the infinitely greater dead, the men who made the State and this place lie buried at your feet. Their monuments, low-lying white islands in the wide red floor, lack names alike and features; one can just descry here and there a long plain robe, a flat cap, a meek head sideways on the shoulder, two folded prayerful hands, and, if one takes the pains, here and there one can avoid treading upon them—but not otherwise. Of these quiet worthies—contemporaries of Dante perchance, Donna Bertas and Ser Martinos, in fact—one would like to know all there is to be told; but outside Dante, outside the Uffizii portrait of old Giovanni di Averardo, and Van Eyck's of the Arnolfini pair, you will be told there is nothing. It is not quite true; you may add Sacchetti, never too much of an artist to use his eyes and his ears. And I will tell you one more source—Florence, to wit. These rubbed, dead folk, who made the place, are alive at this day, and at work all day. Look not for them upon motors in the

Cascine, nor in the boxes of the Della Pergola, not at high mass in the Annunziata; but go down the Calimala early in the morning, and see Donna Berta cheapening a fowl; look within the crazy little shop-doors and observe Ser Martino restoring a masterpiece with his thumb and a saucer of oil. The boys are doing their service, and you will never see the girls unless you mean business. One may be trundling a mop, another mending the fire with the bellows; both will be singing like larks in the sky. Blessed, thrice blessed children of Tuscany, to whom vice is as unknown as virtue, innocence a possession from the cradle to the grave, and gay curiosity as natural as to sparrows! You made Florence, and are keeping Italy alive. All this is as certain as doomsday, and has a great deal to do with Santa Croce, if you will give yourself the trouble to consider it.[1]

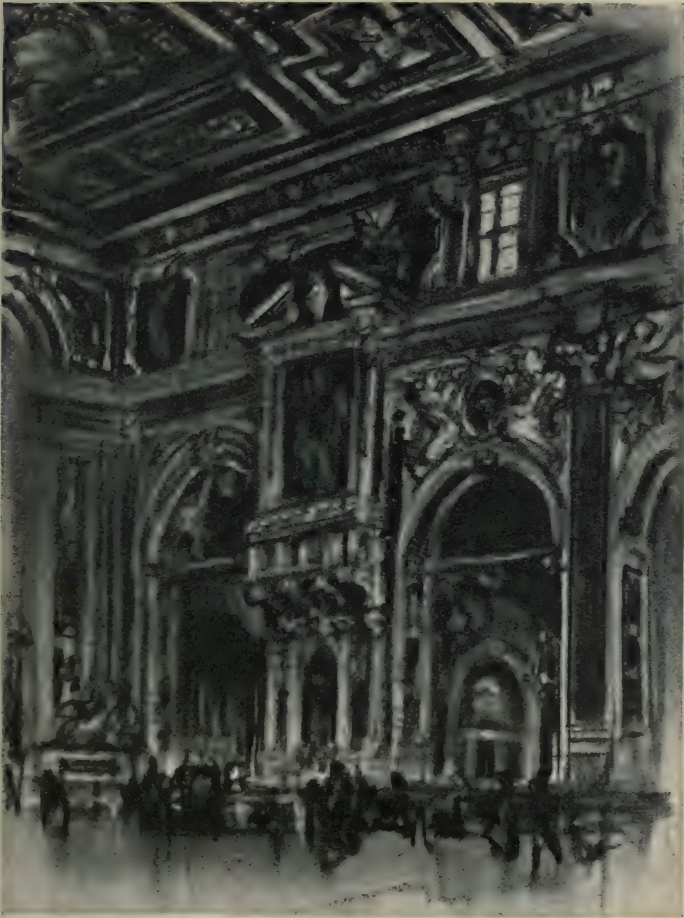
[1] See Appendix to this chapter for some further notes on Santa Croce, but let me hasten to add that since this chapter was written I have revisited the church. They have peeled off the whitewash from the rafters of the roof, and discovered the old painting and lettering; and have now begun, upon the north wall, to lay bare Spinellesque frescoes of Crucifixions, processions of *frati* and what not—good decorative stuff into which the barbarian *Seicentini* deliberately drove their abominable altars and monuments. Heartrending as it is to know what has gone beyond repair, and desolate as the poor, once living things look, struggling behind the hard marble pediments, it is now possible to guess what Santa Croce once was. The church has gained beyond belief by the darkening and enrichment of the ceiling. The decoration, admirable in itself, has nearly doubled the apparent height. The pillars, too, and arches of the

The *Osservatore Fiorentino* will tell you of the Annunziata—church of the Servi di Maria—that for many years it was the custom to hang wax models in it as thank-offerings to the Madonna. If you lost your cat and recovered it by prayer, you suspended its replica, done in wax, by a chain from the roof. Sacchetti says that he himself saw one there; and then he tells a story of a man who lived in the piazza, with a handsome wife and a butt of good red wine to his name. Nominated for Podestà of Borgo San Lorenzo, he must needs leave behind him wine and wife. To the latter, then, he commended the care of the former. "Keep that for me, wife," says he, "against I return. This upon your life and sound skin." She swore upon her hopes of salvation; away went the new Podestà and left her at home, "fare la masserizia." What occurred? At first the confessor of this pretty wife, who was a Servite, in and out all day, kept her company; but presently ceased his visits and began to show her black looks. She bore it for a time; then she goes to visit him with a fluttering heart. "Buon' dì!" "Ugh! Buon' dì." She asks him how

The Annunziata.

nave are in part pared of the grey wash. One can now see the good, squared stones and brickwork. Santa Croce can never again be what it was. It has died with the faith that made it splendid. It must be its own monument, but it may yet show decent interment.

he does. "Scurvily," says he, and complained

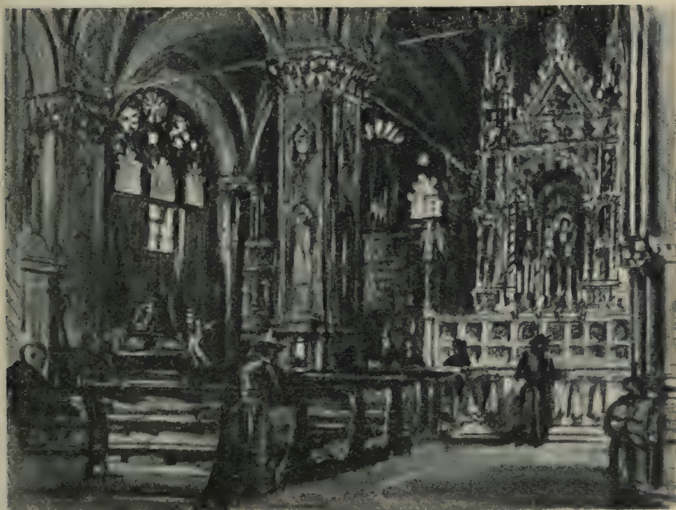


THE ANNUNZIATA, FLORENCE.

of headache, loss of appetite, a sinking, and what not. "Oh, brother," says she, "can nothing

amend this misery?" "Why," he says, "what can amend it when my drink lies cold on my stomach? And yet wine is the life of a man. Now, if I could light upon a wine of quality, I do believe I should soon be about again—and able to visit my friends," says he. "But there, good girl, who is there to give wine to the likes of me? Run away and do your charities. There will be *Frati Minori* at your door, not a doubt of it." "A wine there is," says this young wife, with a tear in each eye, "a wine there is no further away than the house. But my husband's hand is upon the cask. He would sooner lose me than it, I can tell you; for I know what I am to expect if he comes back and finds it tampered with." "My sister, my sister," says the *frate*, "send me a little sup of it, *una piccola ingustaduzza*, for the love of Jesus and Mary." "If it is but a sup, brother," says she, "that you shall have"; and brings it him in her own hands. "Let me see you drink it, brother," she asks him. There was no difficulty in that. "Eh, but that is a wine. That brings the blood to my cheeks!" If he gave her a kiss, I know not who was to stop him. Not she, for certain. The end may be guessed. "Di gustada in boccaletto, di boccaletto in gustada:" here was one's husband due home in a month from now, and the cask on

the lees. "Oimè, trista, come farò?" Says the *frate*, "Think no more of it. Do but make your vow to our Annunziata, and leave everything to her." Says she, "If your Madonna vouchsafe me the grace that my husband vex me not at all about his cask, a fine cask in wax shall she have,



OR SAN MICHELE.

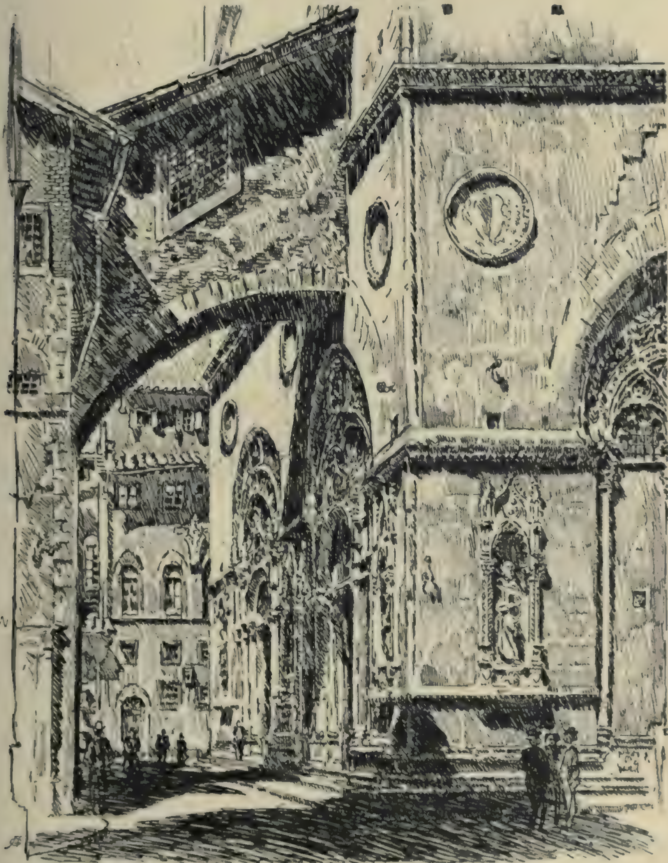
and no less." "Leave it so," says the *frate*, "and you will see what you shall see." Well and good. Home came the husband from his podestàship; and whether it was that his head was in the clouds of his recent glory, or his feet in the trammels of the money-lenders, or his heart like a sponge in his pretty wife's hands—howsoever

it were, he had no memory for his butt of red, which, so far as he was concerned, had never been trodden in a vat, never encasked, and never rolled into house. And now and again when his wife looked in upon the *frate* with the good news, she always had her cheek patted, and was cheered with the words, "Be you very sure, my chuck, that our Madonna never left a handsome girl in the lurch. Greater miracles than this hath she done." So then, says Sacchetti, the lady had made a cask in wax, and sent it to the Annunziata to be suspended from the roof; but he does not say, as he says of the cat, that he had seen it in its place.[1]

If you can admire the forecourt of the Annunziata without looking at the frescoes in it, do so; for it is very fine indeed. The marvel is that any taste or tact of any former generation of Florentines could have suffered these chrome and mauve travesties of a delightful art to be. There are many in the Carmine and cloisters of St. Mark's every whit as bad, save that they are not perhaps so pretentious as these. The soul having

[1] From cats to their masters, from thieved wine to thieving wives, is but a step; in later times images of the grateful themselves were hung in chains from this church roof until it must have looked like the forest of suicides in *Don Quixote*. Then, upon a day, one such fell upon the head of an ambassador and broke it. The Madonna Annunziata was deprived of her unusual glories. Silver hearts must content her now—of which she has an abundance.

gone out of fresco-painting, nothing, it seems, not even cleverness, could enter in. There is no



OR SAN MICHELE, FLORENCE.

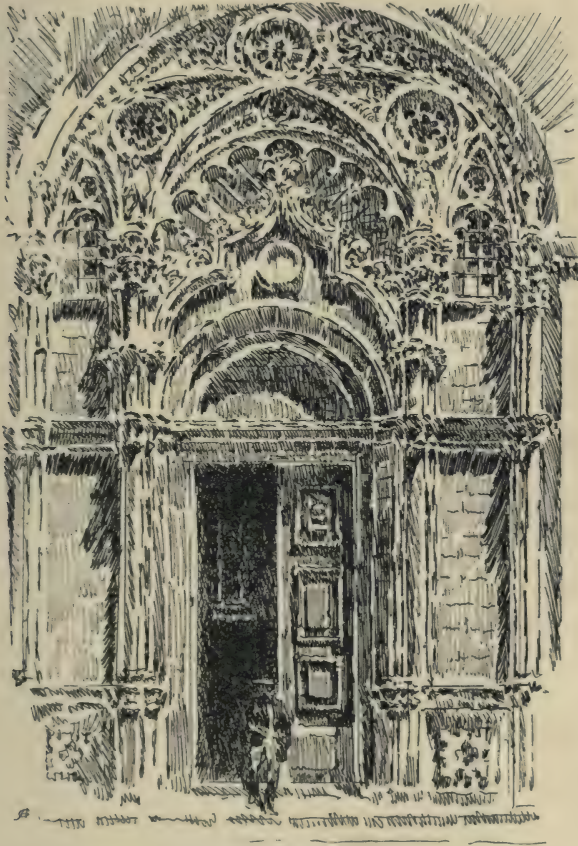
greater vulgarity than ineptitude; and one fresco here is so monumentally inept that it should

stand before all time as a *capo lavoro*. The scene is a church—I know not what miracle of what Servite is doing.[1] There is a high mass, with an archbishop for celebrant. The altar, the clergy, the fulminating Host fill up the middle distance; clouds of amber incense, various devout seraphim, blue satin curtains, etc. the distance. In the foreground—in the body of the nave—is a heap, a fricassee, a salad of naked mammoths in human guise; huge pink backs sprawling, huge pink bosoms nourishing giant babies, nymphs with spilling cruses, fauns, heroes with clubs, demigods, deuce knows who or what is not in this writhing mass. "The God of Nature suffers, the earth is in travail"—some such faded allegory is intended. Let be; but it is all pink and yellow, and worse than Giulio Romano. Let that admired of Shakespeare make of the Palazzo del Tè a stable for nightmares; nobody need go there. But this is a church with a venerable name; great people have prayed here. It is old. A French knight, killed at Campaldino, is recorded by the portal;[2] under the stucco and parcel-gilt frames, under the ochres and raw blues,

[1] Herr Baedeker reports the thaumaturge to be San Filippo Benizzi, the painter Del Sarto, at his worst.

[2] The image of the Sieur Guillaume de Bérard, bailli of Monsire Aymery de Narbonne, on a housed horse, and on his surcoat the *fleur de lys*, is to be seen in the cloister.

there are good fourteenth-century bricks, squared and baked when Corso Donati stalked about



DOORWAY OF OR SAN MICHELE.

Florence, and good fifteenth-century paintings, of which one only remains. Look upon that before you go, taking the pang with you that

of such, once upon a time, was all the Annunziata.

Alessio Baldovinetti tells you the truth here, as he knows it, joyful, hopeful, and most certain.

Alessio Baldovinetti.

Christ, says he, was born in the Val d' Arno; let no good Florentine doubt it henceforward. Here, in a square patch of Tuscan colour—the grey, the chilly blue, the olive-leaf green—you can see the mystery for yourselves, and almost mark the spot where it was wrought. Here is the river, here the dotted plain, with cypresses and white houses and church towers, fading as it does to-day into the pale mist of heat. Here are the hills of the Mugello; Fiesole should be there; behind are the mountains which take you from Pistoja to the north. In this green field the miracle was done: the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us. Shepherd boys play apart, thump each other and look unconscious; but their elders come with light feet to the pent roof and the wattled cote, where Madonna in green and blue adores the new-born child. Hard by, upon a quince-tree, the heralding angels have alighted, like blue and white birds perched up there, their wings still quivering with the flight. One and all have quick Florentine faces, peaked chins, restless eyes, fine noses; they carry their clothes—for the

angels are well dressed—with a flourish, but not with the bravura of the Pisan women, nor with the lazy grace of the Sienese; rather, as if they took innocent delight in their festa finery—which is precisely what they do. For, say Baldovinetti and the rest of those philosophers, it is a great mistake to suppose the angels, archangels, dominations, and powers are essentially different from ourselves. Messeri Petrarca and Boccaccio have taught us better. The only way we can know such persons is by making them; all the rest is vague, if amiable surmise. Make them, therefore, as I, Baldovinetti, do, of your best, and you cannot be far out. If the world, as Baldovinetti saw it, was not a garden of delights, then Christ was born in vain.

In another corner of the cloister Andrea del Sarto has painted the Madonna as a handsome slut sitting, arm akimbo, on a sack of meal. This is to conceive of the world as a garden of *délices*—another thing altogether. To which conception, however, mankind was bound to come, having once been started down the primrose way.

Out in the fine piazza, browbeating the Della Robbia babies on the Foundling, rides the Grand Duke Ferdinand I., a soldierly boor in appearance, who had once been a cardinal, and was a good prince. As cardinal in Rome he had been

"dissolute without being singular," says Captain Napier. He let in the Lorrainers by his marriage with Christina of that house, and begat Cosimo II., who let in the Hapsburg lip and frittered away the stout blood of Cosimo Primo.

The SS. Apostoli.

I shall take you into the Piazza del Limbo, a little white lane out of the Borgo SS. Apostoli, and show you a pleasant inscription :—

VIII° V die VI Aprilis, it runs, *in Resurrectione Domini Karolus Francorum Rex a Roma Revertens Ingressus Florentiam cum Magno Gaudio et Tripudio Susceptus Civium Copiam Torqueis Aureis Decoravit et in Pentecosten Fundavit Ecclesiam Sanctorum Apostolorum in Altari Inclusa é Lamina Plumbea in qua Descripta Apparet. Perfacta Fundatio et Consecratio Facta per Archiepiscopum Turpinum. Testibus Rolandi et Uliverio.*

I can't mend the latinity, but like the breadth of embrace which sweeps in so many great names. Ogier, you see, is left out, and the sons of Aymon ; Naimes of Bavier, reverend sire, should certainly have been added, for he, too, was here in Italy, when Oliver laid Ferragut low, and Roland played the sulky Achilles.

But whether or no Charlemagne ever came to Florence and flew his oriflamme, ever founded this old crumbling, hidden church, whether, indeed, he ever lived, have nothing to do with the matter. Charlemagne is more than a person ; he

is a tradition; he figures a whole nation. The point is that here we have a church built when the Emperor's name, when Roland's, Oliver's

LOGGIA DEGLI INNOCENTI.

names were sounds to conjure with. Breath has never shaped greater ones. Rarer still, Turpin's name had magic in it. For ten persons who have heard of Charlemagne there may be five

who recognise Oliver, and one who knows anything about the Archbishop. So here, in matter of association, you touch the furthest point backward in Florentine story. You are behind San Giovanni, San Miniato, and every existing Florentine church — not in fact, but in memory. For those may evoke the Countess Maud and Bellincion Berti; but this whitewashed basilica, this frowsy, unsunned piazza, take you back among the Franks. Charlemagne and the Peers in Florence! Let us stop here: no church will seem venerable after this.[1]

APPENDIX

FLORENTINE TYPES IN FLORENTINE SCULPTURE—GIOTTO

I shall crave one more word upon the real Florentines, as they are to be found in this church. If you look at Rossellino's Madonna, carved over Bruni's monument, or at Desiderio's over Marsuppini's, or (finest of them all) at Mino's over Count Hugo's in the Badia, you will get the exact presentment of the best Florentine woman at her best. She is to be had also from any fresco of Ghirlandajo's, but I can't talk about Ghirlandajo for ever. And herein these men—Mino, Desiderio, Rossellino—have the advantage over Luca della Robbia, that they do give you character, in their own way, as finely and sharply as Donatello and Verrocchio did in theirs.

[1] Yet there is a pretty thing in this same SS. Apostoli—a Della Robbia *ciborium*, where comely young women-angels push back marble curtains, and cherubs, with bodies and without them, circle and hover round about.

They give you, in fact, not much beside, except a charm, a naïve, incommunicable grace which all the *Primitivi* have got. Their compositions are formal and trite, and their indication of movement or gesture is either excessive or insignificant—sometimes both at once. But the type is unmistakable. Pretty rather than handsome are these women at their best, very feminine (unlike the Sienese girls who have the manly *bravura*), pert rather than remote, graceful as children and vivacious as sparrows: it is all in Mino, Desiderio, and the others. But you will get no character in the lovely women and boys of Luca della Robbia, who, I suppose, for sheer facial perfection, have never been equalled since the *Choëphoroe* were displayed on the Parthenon frieze—those meek and burdened beauties carrying baskets on their heads. Luca no more than Pheidias portrayed person or type. He chose for the ideal, was eclectic, a composer of far-fetched harmonies. Greek through and through, he and Perugino only in all Italy; and it is good to have them there, since we cannot always be hunting after Ser Martino's daughters. There may be place and time for a little more concerning the Hellenism of Luca and Perugino; here I shall only refer the reader—for the perfection of it—to Luca's lunette of the Boys in School on the north face of the Campanile.[1]

Giotto.

And if the reader were with me at this hour in Santa Croce, I would again refer him to the Campanile should he ask me to direct him to the Giottos. There are no Giottos in Santa Croce. Giottos there were; but now they lie hidden deep in folds of tempera. What you will see—certain chocolate lay-figures upon fields of pink and blue—are no more Giotto's handiwork than is the little *Meeting of Joachim and Anna* in the cloister of Sta. Maria, upon which, we may remember, Mr. Ruskin staked his own reputation and the salvation of the tourist. Giotto is to be

[1] Perhaps I may recall here a little fable of my own about Perugino, the chapter in *Earthwork* called "Of Boils and the Ideal."

seen darkly at Assisi, and comfortably in the Arena at Padua, and very extraordinary, very great and very shocking are those pale masterpieces. Best of all he is to be seen in the bas-reliefs of his own Campanile; and there indeed, in a material more permanent than water-paint, you may observe him for the wonder he was, a reader of earth and graver without peer. It would be hard to find a man who could read deeper into this planet. I name our William Blake, whose conceptions were on the same scale of grandeur and simplicity combined, and whose acumen was certainly equal. But he could not draw; whereas Giotto, apart from having been the most imaginative of the Tuscan draughtsmen, was one of the most expert.

One general note more. Stendhal, on his first visit to Florence, paid his first visit in the city to Santa Croce. His soul touched the sublime as he passed the tombs of Michael Angelo and Alfieri; but he pushed on to the choir and found a *frate* there. "Il a été bien aise de voir un français," writes the complacent man. "Je l'ai prié de me faire ouvrir la chapelle à l'angle nord-est, où sont les fresques de *Volterrano*." Frescoes of Volterrano! who knows, or cares whether they are still there? As a matter of fact they are not; but if they were, who would ask a *frate* to open them? But, says Stendhal, "Là, assis sur le marche-pied d'un prie-Dieu, la tête renversée et appuyée sur le pupitre, pour pouvoir regarder au plafond, les Sibylles du Volterrano m'ont donné peut-être le plus vif plaisir que la peinture m'ait jamais fait. J'étais dans une sorte d'extase," he says. Singular man, part of whose genius lay exactly in that kind of banality. It is a truth that his novels depend for much of their effect upon the adept use of the commonplace.

CHAPTER XII

PICTURES IN A GREAT CAGE

When, upon an early page, I warned the reader that I might take a cavalier view of picture-galleries if they happened to stay my footsteps over the Tuscan roads, I knew very well that I should incur the major excommunication of Mr. Berenson and such as he. I remember an exalted passage in one of his books wherein he calls the enthusiast for Ghirlandajo "the superior Philistine," and tremble; but though I tremble I persist. I do seriously maintain that pictures, statues, great churches *being there*, are to be treated as part of the landscape—like trees or waterfalls; that they are for convenience, not cult; that they are admirable for their use, not useful for the admiration they extort from us. It is good to admire; enthusiasm is above rubies; yet it is better to admire a man in his handiwork than his handiwork in a man. Moreover—and this is corollary

Apology of a Philistine.

—there is more, and better stuff than dilettantism in every one of us. The man of affairs, the man of the world, of decent birth, education, and manners, the gentleman travelling for his recreation and profit, is entitled to look at art as he pleases, and to get out of it what he can—although, as a fact, he very seldom does.[1] And he is not to be called a superior or any other kind of a Philistine for so doing; nor is he to be reproved or admonished by any such primitive means.

The threshold.

When, therefore, I confess that, on my visits to the Uffizii I often get no farther than the vestibule, I hope I shall be understood to mean that that affords me food for reflection enough to last me any one day

[1] The reason that he does not get, or look to get, what may profit him out of his artistic researches is that the artist imposes certain conventions upon him—as, *e.g.*, that you may not have a story in a picture, which, of course, is nonsense—and the critic still more. Our amateur, good easy man, pleasantly accepts them all as binding, as having the force of a law, and does his best to obey them. It is a matter for tears and laughing at once to see him. He walks mile after mile of gallery with a little book in his hand. He looks at his book before the picture—often to the exclusion of the picture. If he happen to compare picture and book, and it strike him that what the book declares to be in the picture is not in fact there at all, he is too humane or too tolerant to say so. Humane, do I say? I think he is a thing enskied and sainted when I remember how the writers of these books treat him—how Mr. Ruskin used to scold and rail at him—how laboriously Mr. Grant Allen used to reduce the whole affair to words of one syllable—with what raised eyebrows and sighs of despair he used in every case to begin with the alphabet, and before he could talk of Fra Angelico's *Annunciation* must be sure that you knew all

in Florence; to which I am able to add that it contains a masterpiece, in many respects the masterpiece of the gallery. Here, upon the top of the stair are the busts of most of the little Cæsars, to whom this place, to whom all the whitewash and stucco from the Magra to the Tiber are monuments more fitting than brass; here, in fine, you may behold most of the Grand Dukes and rulers of the people who have made Florence what it now is, and turned nearly all Tuscan towns into corniced, spacious cities, decorated with pills and crowns, and bearded, cuirassed riders upon stallions, and long Latin inscriptions. There is food for the ruminating mind here, if I know anything of the proper kind of nourishment; and to crown all there is a masterpiece.

about the Virgin Mary. And then comes Mr. Berenson to call the poor fellow a superior Philistine because he likes Ghirlandajo, and says so. I declare that one of these days there will be mutiny. I shall join the banner of revolt. So far the traveller has accepted everything at some other body's valuation; but in the deeps of him, just now, a sturdy contempt for criticism which can inflict, or art which can accept such out-and-out dogma is growing and growing. It is in a parallel with the literary convention which tells the British people that Shakespeare is the greatest dramatist ever born into the world. The truth is that he is nothing of the sort to the man who doesn't happen to think so. By thought you may not be able to add cubits to your bodily stature, but most certainly you can add parasangs to your mental. The afflicted tourist has a perfect answer to both artist and critic if he choose to use it. If I am not to judge of the thing, why is it here? More: why am I here? There is but one answer.

You must go into the long corridor to find the twinkling old pedlar, Giovanni Bicci di Averardo de' Medici, behind whose little shop-front was planted the great tree of two branches; and to Botticelli's *Adoration of the Kings* for Cosimo the Elder, that father of his country who sold his child into bondage for 450 years; but here is satyr Lorenzo of the elder line, who completed what his grandfather had begun, and made his family indispensable. The bust of him here is extremely bad, having neither character of its own nor character of him in it; to get a sardonic hint of the tragedy—tragedy with a snigger, as it were—which was played in this man's soul, you must find Vasari's portrait, done from memory—as such a portrait should be done. This bust is a full-dress-parade-piece of a tyrant for whom one must needs have a kindly word. He had a bent for many things, some foolish, some wicked, some swinish; but among them he had one for quiet happiness which would be amazing to read of, unless one could understand how easily a man keeps the comely and the vile in separate lockers of his soul, and can dip in either at will. Here is a letter from one of his children at Poggio to his "dearest father": "Giuliano does nothing but laugh; Lucrezia sews, sings, and reads; Madda-

The Medici.

lena goes knocking her head against the walls but does not hurt herself; Luisa can already say several little sentences; Contessina is making a great noise all over the house."[1] If a man can get these things told him in this fashion, it is certain that he loves to have them told; and if he can love to hear them he cannot be altogether bad. But then nobody is.

Next to him observe Cosimo Primo—a broad-backed man, and emphatically a man. A tyrant's jaw, a tyrant's little eye; but a man's brain, and will, and muscle. Of him I have said something and shall have to say more; I shall only record here that he could do everything with his State except beget heroes to govern it after him. Here, for instance, in poor shaveling Francis, is his woeful first attempt—poor shaveling Francis of the broody eye, drawn mouth, and little chin, who could only buy the ripe Bianca by the help of a Mondragone, but, having got her, clung to her through all, even to the day when she fobbed him off with a spurious child, and he discovered the cheat. He was never made for the harsh uses of tyranny—had, indeed, some tastes of his own which might have made him an indifferent good entomologist or numismatist. He was

[1] This translation is Mr. Armstrong's (*Lorenzo de' Medici*, 1896), from whose excellent book I have stolen the passage.

fond of mechanics, it seems—water-works, weeping metal trees, and the like of them. Bianca raised the devil for him in the Ruccellai garden, as the curious may read in the *Osservatore*.

And here are the rest of them—a series whose brains seem to dwindle as their lips bulge. From Cosimo II., this great porphyry man, and the Hapsburg *frau* he wived, came all the pomp and chalk, and rouge and wig-powder. Smaller and smaller grow the head-pieces, but the wigs expand —until here, in Giovanni Gastone, last of the Medici, you have nothing but a peg for a wondrous peruke; and in the bust itself a masterpiece of ironic humour not to be equalled in this or any gallery of masterpieces known to me. Bernini cannot have done it; the dates are against it; I don't know who can have done it, but he was a bold man and a trenchant. Let it be immortal, gibbeting before all time and all existence the Reign of the Wig—whose dominion, as I need not remind the reader, stretched beyond the limits of Tuscany. *Imago Dei Eminens Supra Tuscos!* So runs the inscription round the coins of this last of the Medici. Here is, then, the image of the god of Florence; and one may trace, after all, a line more bitter than from Cosimo to Gaston. One may trace the diminishing scale of the Tuscan gods—from Dante's Burning Rose to this Wig,

The Last of the Medici

O Heavens! Survey once more before you go

BORGO DEGLI UFFIZII.

this grim crew, bloated or imbecile: you will have before you in epitome the post-reforma-

tion vacuity, the post-reformation tragi-comedy; murder and whitewash, lechery and perfume, lying, gluttony, ordure, putrescence—all smothered in a great wig! No more can be seen in San Lorenzo itself, where, robbed of all but blasphemous epitaphs, these creatures lie adust and quiet. Michael Angelo, who foresaw them all, and lived and laboured for a kind of ghastly forerunner of theirs, has set up figures of his nightmare, gloomy Titans, sprawling, writhing, yawning demigods, too weary to live and not able to die. And if these sights satisfy not the beholder, let him walk farther afield; see Pisa, Arezzo, Cortona, Volterra, and what it has pleased these puffed grandees to make of them. Personally, I have enough sense of them here. After them, the busts of two square-headed gentlemen, who called themselves Ferdinand III. and Leopold II., respectable Lorrainers, reconcile me to churchwardenry for ever. And so into the gallery.

The gallery system.

I think that despair may well fill the heart of the traveller when he enters the great Uffizii rectangle, and sees before him the leagues of imprisoned pictures, torn all of them from their sometime homes and flowering-places, and pinned to these walls. As well study men in a troop-ship, or plants in a botanist's cabinet, as works of art in such a place!

A *Birth of Venus*, which may have seemed a very mystery of sea, shore, and quiet dawn upon the wide walls of the villa, cramped into a cell exactly big enough to hold it, terrified into drab nonentity by a crimson and blue *Coronation* on one side of it and a magenta and yellow tapestry on the other; here is a sight to make Herr Baedeker weep. The huge, winged pageant of Van der Goes', once planned out for a stately altar; a *Perseus and Andromeda*, which once made joyful some bride's store of new linen—ranked here like dry moths, so many specimens merely for the dilettante with his tape-measure and magnifying-glass! Pallid old crucifixes; predellas without their altar-pieces; aumbry-doors torn from the secret Host they sheltered; and all these tricked-out, pretty virgins with their heralding angels, these naked children squeezing goldfinches, clear-eyed boy-and-girl-saints, these *Adorations* of kings and shepherds, *Conceptions*, *Nativities*, and *Assumptions* of Virgins, choirs of heaven, mystic roses, Presentations in Temples, and Circumcisions of divine Boys—alas! what are they doing here? They belong to the Holy of Holies; they illuminate the most recessed song of the soul; they are our intensest private devotion; and here they all are, brazening it out like tavern signs. Well may the traveller say

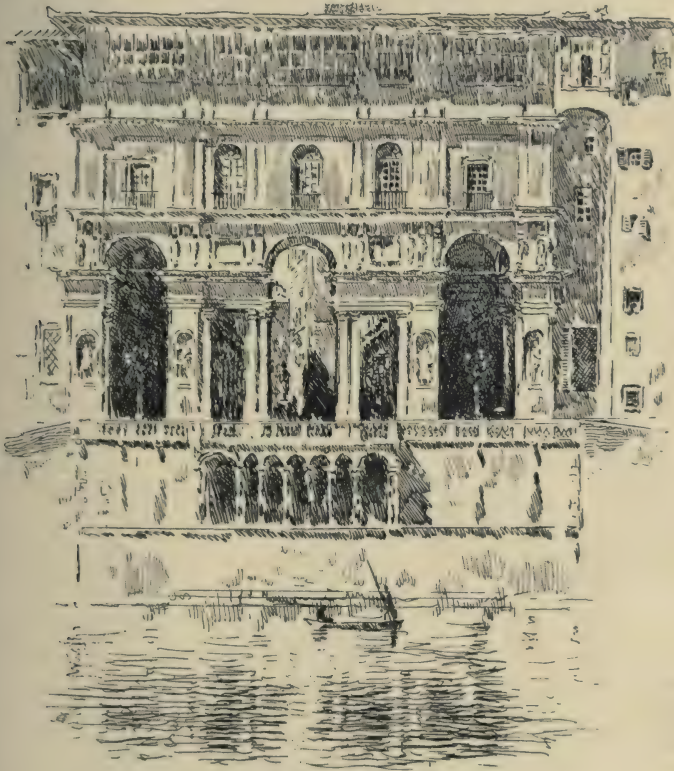
it is a pitiable thing—both that the faith to which they testify can be so dead, and the curiosity they are to satisfy be brutal enough to have killed it.[1]

For do but consider what this thing is which we call a picture, and its maker a masterpiece. Leave apart its ethical or emotional import, don't stay to consider a religious picture as the creative effort of a man at his best confronted by the universe at its best, as the fruit, therefore, of the Divine urging in a man; consider it solely as a delightful thing to see and to look upon. That which makes it so, and was understood to go to the making it so, is its simulation of a natural act. It must seem inevitable where it is—over an altar, deep in a recess, behind a grille at the windy street corner—it must seem to grow there, it must appear to be an efflorescence. And part of the urgency which produced it, believe me, is the flowering instinct in the man quickened by the dæmon of his art. Take a case. Go into some lean and raftered nave, clatter up over the tiled floor, kneel beside a kerchief-covered woman and an old man or so

The nature of a picture.

[1] I need not, surely, point out that the state of feeling which such exhibitions as this evoke is more acute in Italy, the home of these poor pictures, than in England, where we have brought forth other sorts of fruit. For England, imagine Bishop Wilson's prayers or George Herbert's songs ground out upon the grammophone at the Crystal Palace. This is a perfect parallel.

at an altar-rail under a glimmering lamp. The altar is shabby, the candlesticks are pinchbeck, three-quarters of the candles are of wood, the



THE RIVER FRONT OF THE UFFIZII.

other quarter is tallow. The flowers in the paste-board vases are made of rag, the little card on which are the priest's secret prayers is black with grease and dirt ; the tabernacle of the sacrament

has no lock and is smeared with finger-marks. You know very well that the curate has scrambled up to it times and again with his miry boots where they will, and his sticky fingers grabbing for a hold. But there, above all this tawdry ruin, there is a square of greenish blue fainting off to saffron, and that again to ivory. There, upon this mellow field, is a thin stooping woman, with corn-coloured hair and blushing neck and face, and narrow, peering, animal's eyes, who leans her cheek to the naked atom she holds in her arms, and receives his embraces or satisfies his needs as meekly as if she were his bond slave. Her robe is pale rose, her cloak black, with gold-threaded embroidery worked along the hem ; the under-sleeve is crimson, in the slashing is the whitest lawn. About her head is a filmy veil, and over that an aureole as cold and bright and thin as the sickle rim of the moon at her last quarter. But the whole apparition is tinged golden and warm by time, and candle-smoke, and the blue fumes of censers ; you know that it has been blooming quietly, steadfastly there from time whereof there is no reckoning. It is a part of the strange calm and comfort of the place ; it is a citadel of the faith stronger than you would believe. Take it away, the faith must surely perish ; take it away, there is nothing to be made

in this ingenious world which can replace it. Priceless where it is, it is probably worthless where your States-Museum-Director will hang it. Nor is this, of necessity, a religious matter at all. The facts hold good for the Peter de Hooghe in the cool Dutch parlour, or for the Cupid kissing Psyche in a meadow of anemones and columbines in the sala of the great villa on the hill. The men who made them made them for their places. They would not thank you for the honours of a catalogue, nor Herr Baedeker for his starry wreath, in exchange for an aim missed or a pride made beggar.[1]

Coup d'Œuil.

Mr. Symonds at generous length, Mr. Berenson in a more frugal, but somewhat pragmatical manner, Messrs. Crowe and Cavalcaselle in large volumes, and Mr. Grant Allen in a primer, have indicated—and more than indicated—the general story of Floren-

[1] There is one other thing which, taken with this, makes gallery-visiting like a dream of havoc. It is that they fight among themselves, the distraught pictures; that, not content with abiding their own deaths, they are to kill one another. The Uffizii, then, may be considered as one vast shambles, where 2000 Madonnas and 2000 Bimbi are strangling each other. Thus stated, the position will not bear thinking of; thus stated, a great picture-gallery of devotional and votive pictures may become an offence to decency and self-respect which no honest man can afford himself. None of this touches the dilettante and his dry light of research; but I am by no means the only man who has been touched by it. In it is to be found, by him who cares to inquire, the reason why, in this book, my little say about Tuscan pictures at large has been mostly confined to those which are still growing in the corners where they were planted.

tine art; and I in my humble way have fabled its relation to the general process of Florentine life in the chapter concerning the theory that this world is a garden. Divesting the gallery, therefore, of all that it contains to illustrate these works, divesting it also of the merely pretentious, of most of the full-dress-parade pictures, which I am content to leave to connoisseurs of such wares, here is my account of what remains.

Beyond all cavil the blazing gold piece of Simone Martini and Lippo Memmi would not be of that remnant were it not for the humanity of its shrinking, beautiful Virgin Mary. This gesture, this exquisite emotion, immortalise the thing, which neither gold nor ultramarine can ever do; nor do I believe greater insight, or motion in its way more dramatic, is to be found in any picture here. There are many more gorgeous—Angelico's *Coronation*, Lorenzo Monaco's *Adoration*, with a burnished background—but none more aptly dramatic.

Simone Martini.

For the same reason—its instinct for humanity and significance—the judicious will admire in Agnolo's *Annunciation* two things which mark it out: the angel kneeling bolt upright, and the formal arrangement which turns a religious anecdote into a sacred

Agnolo Gaddi.

mystery. There is nothing else to stop you on your way past saints and angels in a blare of gold and crimson—except the intensely humorous, living, and quirkish Giovanni Bicci de' Medici, to which I have referred, and shall again refer more than once—until you come to the great battle-piece of Paolo Uccello's—all darkness, spears, and horses' rumps. This is a work of great art anywhere or in any company. After all, no human being alive or dead has been able to do more, in the way of art, than reduce some great fact of nature or supernature to a comprehensive and significant formula. To do that is to do artist's work; to do it grandly, with a great air, as of some god surging in you, is to play the fine artist and achieve the masterpiece. In divers ways it may be done; for where one will redact it into sonata or poem, to be rolled out in strong floods of martial sound and speed, another stamps it in gold and black and fuliginous streaks upon your wall. This Paolo Uccello has done, and this yet again; he has put music in. The golden trumpets on the left have just this effect; they speak, they herald, they chide. This, then, is a very song of war.[1]

Paolo Uccello.

I don't myself believe in the lumpy Baldovin-

[1] I need hardly say that we have its fellow at home; though this at Florence, to my sense, is the finer of the two.

etti which comes near by the Uccello, and the less because of the exquisite fresco of his at the Annunziata, of which I have already discoursed. Nor can I admire so heartily as I might the three Cassone-fronts of Piero di Cosimo's, when I remember our *Cephalus and Procris* which is his. That there was a natural magic in the man is to be seen in what he has put into that dawn-tragedy down by the still lake; that there is some in this *Andromeda-Perseus* affair I will not deny; but there is not nearly so much. And, of course, what little there may have been is all evaporated in this vast corridor. A Cassone-picture is for one's bedroom, to be pored over in early wakeful hours, and read from, story upon story. For stories come into the room long before your servant.

Depreciations.

But on the left-hand side of the door of the Gem-room is a little square picture [No. 86] by *Ignoto toscano del Quattrocento*, which with what bad drawing and worse painting it may display, seems to me of better worth than a dozen brocaded Filippino Lippis. And for why? Because it does contain a truly observed thing and a strong effort to render it —to wit, a gesture of wanton youth, a reality, and an essential fact. In this possibly ill-contrived little masterpiece you have a secular

An Unknown.

Madonna struggling with a wilful Bambino, who stiffens himself in her arms, and recks nothing whether he fall and break his neck or no. You can see her laughing perplexity; how she holds him fast, with what wonder watches the new sally of her baby—herself not much out of babyhood yet. I don't say that all this is exactly here, but that the man has struggled to put it here; that so much of it is here that I am able to recognise it on the instant. And I say that a man, to be a painter worth talking about, must have more to show for himself than the tricks of his trade, more than a manner of laying canvases, of laying on paint, of massing, and balancing, and toning, and getting the value of this, that, and the other. If he paint the mother of God or the mother of men, if he paint the Son of man, or any poor son of woman, there must be more than formula, much more than brocade, if the result is not to prove a diagram or a dappled square, which you only hang upon the wall because there is not room to stretch it upon the floor. The instinct to seek, to observe, to express humanity is, *ex hypothesi*, in all artists, great or little; but the evidence of it in some is stifled, in nearly all concealed. And, oddly enough, the better artist a man is technically, the more he conceals that instinct which is his only

proper glory. You have to be a tolerably bad craftsman to leave bare your own preoccupations, your delights, your yearnings and struggles; and this is why bad pictures are often more interesting, and always more instructive, than good ones, and why Botticelli has earned his cult. Not that Botticelli was a bad craftsman—far from it; but it's certain that he tried to express more than was possible; and that while he failed to do that, he betrayed to us all his passion. So it is here with my *Ignoto toscano*. What interested him, long before the time, was *genre*: an interior, a young mother tussling with her baby. He hasn't done it, but he has tried for it; and because he has failed you know what he wanted to do. *Non so se mi spiegho*, as they say here.

Scuola Toscana.

Off this great corridor there do open the many rooms devoted to the school of Florence, filled with full-dress pieces which may have served their uses upon high altars, but serve few here. Their chief interest is archæological; the dilettanti pore over them like Jews at Christie's; the brochurists make great play; and once a month a learned critic writes to a learned periodical to say that the description of such-and-such, hazarded in the last number by Herr X. or Monsieur de Y., is patently based upon insufficient data. To my mind, I take

leave to say, this is the way to reduce pictures to the level of settees and little dishes of enamel. A settee or a snuff-box may be good art: in kind it is as passionate a business to build an *escritoire* as the Cathedral of Chartres, in kind it is as nervous a business to carve a cherry-stone as to model *Ilaria del Caretto*, to paint a pipe-bowl as the *Primavera*. But are there no degrees? Are pictures only furniture, only bric-à-brac? Upon my life, I had always supposed them more. But if Herr X. and Monsieur de Y. and the Cavaliere Z. are right, then I have always been wrong.

Until I am convinced of error, however, I shall not hesitate to declare that your vast panoramic *Assumption of the Virgin* by Fra Bartolommeo, your crowded *Epiphany to Kings* by Filippino Lippi, even your *Sacred Conversations* by Botticelli and his friends, interest me but sparingly. They do not seem to me good of their kind; for if you desire meticulous detail, exquisite detail, you have but to see the great Van der Goes; and if you want bravado and colour, you will assuredly look for Paul Veronese or Peter Paul Rubens; or if you want drawing, you will be wiser to inspect the designs of those very men for those very pictures I am decrying. The Tuscan art was drawing, and the true Tuscan quality in art was "distinction,"—that something which is almost

the same as "style," that personal something which identifies a gentleman, at once, or (say) a Frenchwoman; and an art so delicate and so diaphanous suffers when it is overloaded with paint—with paint, observe, not colour; and a quality so peculiar is necessarily not remarkable when all the pictures, which, singly, might display it, are herded together.[1] Wherefore, in all the splendours of the rooms of the *Scuola toscana*, I only call attention to Lorenzo di Credi's naked *Venus*, a pretty brown girl of the country, and to the fact that she looks undressed in this overloaded company.

There are two fine portraits in the room which we may call the *Calumny* room: Pollajuolo's *Galeazzo Sforza*, an elegant, incisive, great-mannered thing, and Lorenzo di Credi's *Verrocchio*, like a little creased rogue of a cheesemonger, a good, sober, humorous piece of work. There are other good portraits, but these stop you at first glance—or they stop me. And in the Tribuna it is portraits again which hold my eyes waking, as the Psalmist says.

Portraits.

[1] If I am right about this, and if the real Tuscan Art were drawing, and the real Tuscan quality distinction, these two facts are enough to explain why it is that the Florentines were always happier with fresco than with oil or tempera, and why, to obtain the full value of a Florentine picture, you have to see it alien company. Any visitor to the Sistine Chapel or to the galleries of Milan, Venice, and Paris, will agree that these things are so.

I don't believe a better diagram was painted in the fifteenth century than Mantegna's portrait of *Elisabetta of Urbino;* nor, great as the times were for portraiture (with all Venice, with Spain, France, and the Low Countries at the work), can I remember pictures which have moved me more than Bronzino's tragic presentment of the doomed Panciatichi pair: that sad, diseased, beautiful, dying woman; that fantastic, self-informed, disastrous, red-haired, mad Marquis, with his shocking light eyes and heedless lips. What a couple! what a tragedy! Shakespeare could have done it: Lucrezia Panciatichi for Desdemona, and this sick-brained ape of folly to kill her with loathing, not a pillow. Bronzino has one other tragic portrait here, in the Sala del Baroccio, of Eleonora del Toledo in pale brocade, with hag-ridden eyes and a set, stern mouth, upon a background of electric blue, and with murder, infamy, and lewdness in the air that goes through those fine-winged nostrils of hers. Not to be compared to either Holbein on one side or Rembrandt on the other, there is that about Bronzino's mathematical austerity which goads the imagination. The very coldness of the man is a sting; he seems as dispassionate as Dante.

Bronzino.

I would commend also, if I pass by, the

Sustermans gallery of portraits. A man of remarkable force and verve; a swaggering, hit-or-miss, have-at-you-there kind of a man, I find him. With the airs of a bully and the savours of a rip about him, one can hardly imagine a better painter for the work he had to do. He wrought at the grand dukes of the Medici line,—black-avised, bloated, and high-blooded,—at them and their ladies of the right hand and the left. It is more possible, with his aid and Zocchi's and Callot's, to get at the monstrous parade and ghastly intrinsic vanity of the seventeenth century than at the truth of any other age in Florence. And that we may leave the Uffizii with a clean tongue, I will invite you to look at the brisk, airy piece of Giovanni di San Giovanni's, the *Burla del Piovano Arlotto*, full of light; all character, vivacity, and thin, clear paint; the work of a man who might have been the Hogarth of Florence, or its Longhi, but who, so far as I know, did nothing but this one picture to justify the pretence.[1]

Sustermans.

A tonic for the end.

[1] There are religious frescoes of his at San Giovanni, his native place in the Upper Val d' Arno—poor yellow and blue things of the usual kind.

CHAPTER XIII

THE WAY OF LUCCA

When you are weary of the dust in town, and see all Bond Street in Vieussieux' shop; when the sacred dove has spluttered its course, and white oxen have haled into retirement the Pazzi's car; when the *bibite* sellers in the Piazza have convinced you that it is possible to make *limonata* without lemons, and not to improve it by that omission;—then you may remember that the striped tulips are to be found in the olive yards, and that up in the villa garden young men are pruning the roses on the walls. Then also you call Trombino, the jaunty proprietor of two old horses and a *milordo*—for thus he calls his carriage—and bid him make ready for the road. Brilliant as may be his acquiescence, you are bound to reflect that had you told him to set fire to Santa Croce his answer would have been the same. *Servo suo:* it has an ingratiating sound, and commits you to

Tuscan preparation.

nothing. He disappears to make his preparations, or you are to suppose it; you don't see him for ten days. You see nothing—no horses in the stalls, no carriage under the pent. The eve of departure cometh; you meet Trombino in the lane. Hat in hand, he bears the brunt of this dialogue:—

Padrone. I have wished to assure myself that you are ready. Is all in order?

Trombino. Sissignore. All is ready.

Padrone. Ah, for example——?

Trombino. Signore, I have bells for the horses, and the tails of foxes against the flies. I have striped blankets of a certain gaiety to keep the dust out of the baggage. I have a new thong to my whip. All is ready.

Padrone. These things have their uses, no doubt; but I have not been able to see the carriage. I hope I may trust you for the springs.

Trombino. Signore, si. They have been painted yellow and black.

Padrone. Painted! Speak to me of the horses. We have a long stage to-morrow.

Trombino. It will be nothing. My horses have brass accoutrements. The harness is as good as new. And there are bells. Also, the tails of the foxes——

Padrone. Well! You have already referred to them. Remember, we start at seven-thirty sharp.

Trombino. Come lei crede. Riverisco.

Thus the *vetturino* of Ponte a Mensola girds his loins and complacently faces the road. With

S. FREDIANO, FLORENCE.

peacock-feathers dancing on two crests, with jingling brass and wrangling bells, with a whip most importunate, and eight hoofs making independent music, we took the road to Lucca and the sea before third mass was done in San Frediano.

The shabby gate of this worthy conducts you

from Florence to Lucca, and with reason. For it once conducted into Florence the great Lucchese, San Frediano himself. He, by all accounts, was the first Christian in Tuscany, and Lucca, whose bishop he was, the first Christian city. The first city of Light should be called Light: *Luce* was therefore the name bestowed, "now by corruption of the vulgar become Lucca." Here is a simple clue to what has long puzzled the philologists. This San Frediano, having turned the Serchio for the benefit of the Lucchesi, and set bounds to it, subdued next the Arno to suit his occasions, as you shall hear. For having an urgent desire to visit as a pilgrim the church and body of San Miniato on the Mount, he came to Florence, and, for reasons best known to himself, by the north road, that is, by Buggiano and Pistoja. Not daring to enter the city because of the pagans, and confronted by the river in flood, upon its heavy waters he did not hesitate to embark in a little skiff, against the will of the boatman. "By a wonder of God's grace he crossed over freely and soon, as if Arno had been little; and there, where he landed, a church of San Frediano, through devotion to him, was built by the Catholics of Florence." And I may add that church, gate, and quarter, all of his name, give

San Friano.

On the Arno

more than a hint of his origin. For San Frediano—now we come at it—was an Irishman, and Irish to behold is the quarter of his children, a place of smeared aprons, slippers down at heel, touzled heads of sleeping malefactors, dirty wine-shops, unglazed casements, shrill voices, fighting, gossip, and much laughter; densely packed with the unthrifty poor, their grievances, families, and fleas. It has always had a bad name, and still has, to the polite; but it has made history, and may again. To San Frediano, for instance, belonged a certain rascal called Cheat-the-Cat (*Bugigatto*)—a [illegible] of sedition against their lordships the priors, a wool-carder by profession, but by election a demagogue. The taking of Cheat-the-Cat in the midst of his periods, and the screwing of him on the rack, were the beginning of the notable riots which history calls "of the Ciompi," and the occasion for the emerging of one of the heroes of Florence—Michele di Lando the wool-comber, no less. This man by his talents, insight, and a rough sort of equity, ruled all the city for some six weeks, rather after the fashion of Abou Hassan ibn Bekr, the Sleeper Awakened of fable. And when he was done and done with, Florence was the poorer by some fine houses and the richer for his strenuous figure. For the history of the town can give you no

more salient scene than that in the crowded Piazza—Michele di Lando in shirt and breeches dubbing Salvestro de' Medici a Knight of the People. San Friano, as they call it, now is no less outlaw in mind, though now it proclaim the fact by dirt, outcry, and the exercise of illicit trade. Far beyond the gate its disgustfulness extends, afflicts the road, gives a scum to the eyes, a tetter to the houses. For if the road from Florence to Lastra is the worst in Tuscany, the suburb which it serves is the worst about Florence—to say which is to say all. For your compensation you will have, what Tuscany never fails of, the dim spring landscape, air warm and mild, yet with a friendly bite; Monte Oliveto deep in ilex on the south, the blue barrier of the Pistojesi to the north, and before you a vista of grey and rose, and a lavender sky, the promising haze of fervent weather, into which you must presently go.

Castel-Pulci.

You cross what Browning calls the "flashing Greve," whence Buondelmonte came "and all our woes," and which I saw coloured like a kingfisher, blue and green; and then reach Castel-Pulci on a hill, a wide-winged villa of the ceremonious days, with stone cressets on the parapet, gods and goddesses upon the terrace, a stairway of two ascents, and a dead-

straight avenue of hornbeams leading the eye by long parallels to the doors. The Pulci lived here,

PORTA SAN FREDIANO, FLORENCE.

but long ago; a great race, if we may believe Cacciaguida and the profound Borghini. Ruined before Cosimo de' Medici's day, Florence only

knew them as a family of three brothers and a sister, all poets, all handsome, and all poor. Luigi was the youngest of them, and not only the best workman, but to my thinking the very best of all those tragico-comico-romantics, poets of embroidery, after-supper trouvères, whom the time and the taste called forth. If you love romance the *Morgante Maggiore* will wound you in a tender part; if you are devout you will not read very far. You must, in fact, be a persistent trifler to be pleased. The *Morgante* deals with that high "Matière de France," Charlemagne, Roland, Naimes of Bavière, Ogier, and Ganelon —with the matter, but not in the manner:

> Rollanz est proz e Olivers est sages,
> Ambedui unt merveillus vassalage.
> Puis que il sunt as chevals e as armes,
> Sa pur murir n'eschiverunt bataille—

thus the *Chant de Roland* in the great old epic way. But this is Luigi Pulci's way with Renaud of Montauban, that dire son of Aymon:

> Rinaldo quando e' fu nella battaglia,
> Gli parve esser in ciel tra' cherubini,
> Tra suoni e canti . . .

This was the new, gilt-edged epic, which was content to suppose a knight-at-arms in the press of spears, thinking of the cherubim, and harps of

gold, and the celestial quire. I think Margutte, his guzzling giant, speaks best for Luigi:

> Rispose allor' Margutte, a dirtel tosto,
> Io non guardo più al bigio ch' a l' azzurro;
> Ma piacemi il cappon lesso e arrosto,
> E voglio qualche volta anche del burro.

Here is the philosophy of his kind. He believes no more in the black than the blue, and as much in God as in man. But beer will serve when the wine is out, and it's an amusing world if the butter is fresh.

The abominable road takes us far from Castel-Pulci, which they say is now a mad-house; it jolts and bruises us to Lastra, of which walled and bastioned dirty town it is meet to say nothing. As little shall we say of its sister Signa, on a sharp hill. Men of Signa were unsavoury to Dante, you may remember; the town is no sweeter for the centuries. You can see it red and white through a tracery of leaves, and go to it if you choose by bridge or ferry. You will be wiser to hail it in passing as the last of Florence, and cock your nose for country smells.

Field, furrow, and down.

Sure enough, when the valley closes in, does Tuscany resume herself, and old primeval things are discovered droning the diurnal round as they did when Virgil sang the Chant of the Plough. Here are the littered

farmyards, stone pigeon-houses, and Madonnas flowering in old walls; here the ox-teams creep along—Titans caught and yoked—their heads close to the ground, their horns a cause of entanglement and grief. Here, with the same wandering, plaintive melody (insisting on the minor), *cantat frondator ad auras*, as he did in the plains watered by reedy Mincius; here are pigs in the clover and geese on the grass, beans in flower and golden-tipped vines in the bullace-trees; and here are the peasants in the field, men and boys and girls, in rags which fold about them like bronze, and with glossy brown legs which Donatello might have copied, and indeed did copy. What he got also of theirs, the dignity of these dumb creatures, their slow, reposeful eyes, measured motions, patience, akin to the great beasts, their fellow-labourers, or the great earth, mother of us all, is a thing more enviable. To be at once so graced, so toil-worn, and so still! Herein they resemble their mother; even now they are so close that their very hue is of her; at a distance they are as the clods, nearer like dusty trees, or landmarks spattered with dry mud and caught straws. I had sight of one such—a lad in a felt hat, such as the Greeks gave the young Hermes—who, with the head and limbs of a Hermes, stood at gaze in a bean-field, leaning

on his tall hoe, one hand cupping his chin. If he was clad in an old cotton shirt and pair of blue cotton breeches, you hardly knew it. These things were as nothing—parts of him as he was part of the landscape. Near by was the hovel he lived in—a starved, windowless shelter from the rain. He shared it with hens, dogs, children, and goats. Why not? A chance of the Kingdom of Heaven, an eye for God in the Mass, was all that separated him from them. While the hens were conceiving eggs, and the goats storing their udders, what was he doing but after his kind? He munched his crust afield with them, rested in the heat with them again, went under the roof-thatch with them to sleep. I suppose his vocabulary contained a hundred words, all monosyllables; and theirs nearly as many. The happier he! Nowadays the Italian Government draws him in and makes a soldier of him. In stiff tunics, shouldering incredible loads, he and his brothers run about in flocks behind breathless and indignant subalterns. He is taught to read and write, and to do other things neither so polite nor so convenient. It makes little difference. His term over, he comes back to the land, to his dumb outlook and his monosyllables. What is he to read? To whom shall he write? With whom is his commerce to be? So the

earth draws him back with her other children—the hens, the goats, and dogs; and these I hold to be kindlier mates for him than narrow-eyed Bonaroba on the pavement, or bold-eyed Marietta at the window. What he thought of us I would give much to know. He was still amid-field, hand to chin, when I last saw him, and the hens were pecking grain between his legs.

Montelupo, Capraja.

As the hour swings toward high noon, the sun in a clear sky shows this to be a valley full of surprises: quick turns of the green river, terraces with vines, rocks, abrupt hills clouded with olives. You think of Salvator Rosa, and wait to see brigands (one on a white horse) crossing a ford, or, in some rocky glade or other, soldiers playing cards on a drum-head. These enclosing hills are not high, but have character and outline. Sometimes they give you a fretty edge, like a saw's; sometimes to a longer curve cypresses make sharper teeth; sometimes you come upon a broad grey down, like those of the Winterbourns to the north of Salisbury, dotted so with the intense black of juniper that the whole looks like some huge plover's egg; and then you know where Piero della Francesca got his landscape. But all this changes after San Miniatello. The valley broadens into a great bay, the hills decline, in order, as it seems, that

Montelupo and her sister may appear the more grandiose: Montelupo and Capraja, one on each side of Arno, rock-seated, castellated, towered, with purple roofs rising in steps as the houses climb—Capraja daringly beautiful, with a pink belfry standing up like a flower stalk out of grey

CAPRAJA.

and green. Of Capraja they tell a good tale, which rounds off a stave of Buondelmonte's saga—a vengeance taken on the plotters of that fine young man's murder, and yet again a vengeance on the avenger.

You must know that after the death of Buondelmonte war raged in Florence for some

fourteen years or more. Ranier Zingane de' Buondelmonti, a wise and magnanimous person, brother of the dead, led the Guelfs; Schiatta degli Uberti, as of course, the Ghibellines. The war burnt itself out, the land was quiet; they thought to cement the peace by a marriage. Former experience should have warned them: note what happened. Schiatta degli Uberti offered his son, Neri Piccolino, to Ranier Buondelmonti for a daughter of his; the pair were betrothed, if not married. Then, in the castle of Campi, the Berteldi, Mazzinghi, and Buondelmonti made a love feast, to which they asked their sometime enemies. Schiatta went, nothing doubting, and Oderigo Fifanti with him—the murderer, you may remember, who disliked the cold. On a signal given the Guelfs jumped up from the board and attacked the Ghibellines. Schiatta was killed outright by Ranier; Oderigo Fifanti was barbarously sliced. They cut off his nose, his upper lip, and slit his mouth to the ears. Some escaped to cry the horrid fact in Florence. Neri Uberti sent back the girl, with the message that he would never breed from a traitor's imp; atrocious war followed, and the sun of Farinata degli Uberti arose. In the year 1249 the Guelfs were driven out of Florence after a day and a night of street fighting. Ranier Buondelmonti

and his family took refuge in Capraja,—just now in front of us in a glory of sunlight and pink buds, —and the Ghibellines blockaded them, having a base at Fucecchio and a good hold on Montelupo here. The blockade was close, the year wore to the spring. The Emperor Frederick came into Tuscany with his army. He would not go to Florence, where he would now have been welcome, because an oracle had told him that he should die there. The odd thing is that, not at Firenze, but at Firenzuola he *did* die. Meantime Capraja, starving, but putting on a bold face, was in treaty for peace upon honourable terms. Ranier Buondelmonti and his garrison were to march out with the honours of war: all this had been settled in council by the besieged, and was in the fair way to be agreed upon by the besiegers. Now comes in accident, *inexorabile Fatum*, the destiny of cobblers, who have ever been a grudging race. Such a cobbler there was in Capraja, one of the ancients of Florence, who had not been called to the council. The neglect preyed upon his mind, and festered, and bred corruption of his honour. He went one day to the gates and told the enemy the true state of the case within walls. Terms were shortly refused; starvation did its work; Ranier and his garrison had to surrender. In May 1249 they went to

Fucecchio at the mercy of Frederick. They were all transported in chains to Apulia, some to be killed, others to be maimed. Ranier Zingane de' Buondelmonti was saved alive, but blinded by the red-hot basin. "In the Isle of Montecristo he ended his days in religion." Learn now the fate of the cobbler. Farinata and his friends guaranteed his safety, and while they held Florence all went well with the man. But the Guelfs came back and knew him again. "So the people rose up and stoned him, and the children dragged him about the streets till they were tired; and then he was thrown into the sewer." Thus Villani with Spartan brevity. But Buondelmonte's saga really ends at Monteaperto; and here is enough of high tragedy for the time —*paulo minora canamus.* It was at Montelupo that they made those pale plaques of *faience*, lemon and blue and tender green, which you may still see set in the walls hereabouts telling their romantic tales: Madonna receiving a fluttering angel, or Assumed into heaven in a starry robe; Saint Andrew with his scissor-cross; Saint Christopher carrying the world on his shoulder. The accursed collector and his cabinet is responsible for the modern stuff (for such is made) which has to serve many a homestead in default of better. The colours have become

glaring, the lemon a harsh chrome, the iris-blue nearly black; invention is gone, and with it, in large measure, the piety which asked and that which provided these pretty safeguards. But that is the way of religions as well as of their emblems. Over-emphasis is always suspicious: "the lady doth protest too much, methinks." The colours of this latter-day stuff are gross, they hurt you without your knowing why. If you are a philosopher you inquire, if a plain man you look elsewhere for your comfort. The Tuscan land, indomitably serene—the hills, the woods, and the flowing water—is all you have left to rejoice in; for the rest, memory must provide your soul with meals.

The cross-roads, Fucecchio, Ponte a Cappiano, Contado di Lucca.

After Empoli—to which I shall return—the road divides into three. One will take you among the hills to San Miniato and the south; one to Pisa over a dead level; another to Fucecchio and Lucca, and that was my road. It is a dull business for many a mile,—fat, smiling country, very green, but not without reminder of the hills. You can still see the Pistojese uplands far to the north, clouds about their dark bases, through a rent a gleam of snow; looking behind you will mark the softer contours which hem in Elsa, and provide the resting-places for a score of towns—

San Miniato, with a tall, broken tower, Certaldo, Colle, Poggibonsi, San Gimignano, and Siena herself, lady of all that land. You cross the Arno by a fine long bridge, well worth the pence they tax you, and are deep in tangled hedgerows; then, at the end of a shady road, embanked above the fields, you see a pile of building, purple and creamy white, with heavy square towers and a binding wall. That is Fucecchio, like a lord's castle, which has seen many lords rise and fall. Castruccio had it once, or thought he had. He entered in a night of storms, when the wind, ravaging the turrets, drowned the noise of his men carrying the gates; he got all but the citadel, but for want of that could not hold what he had. He fought his way out next day, on foot, he and his knights, and escaped to Lucca wounded in the face. Again he came on, and yet again; not even Altopascio could secure it to him. At the hour of his greatest glory, when he was looking into Florence from Bellosguardo, and setting his men and light women to run races round the walls, Fucecchio remained faithful.

There was a family of Della Volta who had a tower there and bred a line of appetent captains. They came very near to holding Fucecchio and all the country. Their names betray them for hardy, big-throated ruffians of the familiar sort.

Corrado was one; they called him Corradaccio. Then came Guido, whom they also swelled into Guidaccio; then another Corradaccio. They fell a-quarrelling with the Simonetti; they fought at night in the cut-throat alleys, and hanged each other by day out of the windows of the citadel. "There were plenty of dead and speared men in that country," says the historian, "and of men taken and hanged by the neck." No doubt of it. The din they made surged up and down the valley and rumbled far off into the hills. It set the Malpigli and Mangiadori fighting in San Miniato, the Ardinghelli and Salvucci in San Gimignano. But to continue would be tiresome. When every little huddle of tenements is held by a robber in a tower; and for every towered robber there is another with a grudge against him, what are you to make of the history of Tuscany? The fermenting of small beer. Let the dead Fucecchiesi alone, and *Avanti, Trombino, per Cappiano!*

Cappiano, the Contado di Lucca.

Ponte a Cappiano, where by a covered bridge you cross a swift little river—which I take to be the Guisciana, and know to hold trout—was where Castruccio drowned most of the Florentines flying from Altopascio. He not only knew that they would take that road if he beat them, but knew that he should beat them, cool-head that he was.

So he laid his plans accordingly, and had an ambush at Cappiano. It is now a bright and prosperous town, amphibian, with seine-nets drying in the sun and files of ox-carts patient in the streets. There are boat-builders' yards by the water, and spades in sheaves in the shop-doors. It has a Teuton look — might be in Lincolnshire or Nassau. Just beyond it, by a white house, you face a long hill which you must by all means climb. It is the first ridge of the Cerbajese hills, a spur of the Apennines (on whose hither slope is Altopascio) which sets two nations apart—the hard-favoured Florentines and the gentle Lucchese. You are to leave the Arno, go down to the Serchio, and find everything changed: a country with smaller features, tillage of more thrifty neatness, men of better manners, and women of how much more grace. Not only so, but the churches are more dignified, the oxen are larger and more placid, and they yoke them to the wains in a different way. The exquisite husbandry! From henceforward the country is deep ridge and hollow, every little mount is terraced to the top. Olives grow in smoky ranks on these hill-sides, vines between them, springing corn and flax carpet the glades, silvery masses of *carciofi*. The bottom land is well drained, and every furrow worked within an inch of its yield.

All valleys are green in a sense: the valley of Arno is pale green. But in the Lucchese the soil is as red as rust, and the verdure looks the sappier for the contrast. Yet it is not to be denied that this neatness and snug-ordered comfort has its tiresome side. The Vale of Serchio is like a parlour; the Lucchesi comb their mother earth and put on her a clean smock. Between Cappiano and Capannori there is but one hunting-ground for Dian and the nymphs, one bare fell where you might hear the whoop of Pan; and that is the windy down of Altopascio just beyond a spinny of pines. Other sounds can be heard there—the moaning of the ghosts of dead and stricken men. At Altopascio, I need not tell the learned reader, one is on the scene of Castruccio's crowning act. Altopascio, a straggling village, with an old church on a green, lies on the slope towards the leafy plain of Lucca, round about a little stream.

Altopascio and its hero.

Castruccio Castracane degli Interminelli made himself lord of Lucca, Pisa, and Pistoja by sheer ability. If it seems his good fortune to have followed closely upon the trace of another fine captain, Uguccione della Faggiuola, the Aretine, the answer is that he had the wit to see where the straight course lay, and the moment to take up the chase. He came out

of a prison to the lordship of Lucca; he helped the Pisans get rid of a tyrant with such masterful ease that they could not avoid choosing him for the next; he hemmed in Pistoja, picking up outpost after outpost, till he had that city in his pocket; he took an army through the mountains to the very heights above Genoa, and would have had the place but for a sudden call to the south. He beat the Florentines and their allies three times, and had them helpless within their walls for half a year. In the year of his death he was master of the south as far as San Casciano, of the north to the Garfagnana, of all the west. He had the whole of the Florentine contado, and was in the fair way to be Duke of Tuscany. He died at forty-seven of a feverish chill, with a grim pleasantry on his dry lips. A swift, ruthless, flashing man, imperially minded, with a boyish face, red hair, and high colour, a bare-headed fighter who never could get enough of it, and hero of innumerable legends, was Castruccio Castracane. Of these last the best is Sacchetti's, to this effect:—

Sacchetti's tale.

"Now I will shift my ground a little, and tell how Castruccio Interminelli, lord of Lucca, served a chamber-hero, one of those rufflers who will do wonders against a wall. This Castruccio, one of the wisest, wariest, and

most intrepid lords that have been in the world for many a day, who made war upon the Florentines, and gave them more than enough to think of, being their very cordial enemy, among other famous things did this one. He had taken the field in the Val di Nievole, and intended on such and such a morning to go and eat in a castle which he had snatched from the Florentines. Thither he sent a servant of his to prepare the tables and the food. This man goes to the castle to make his arrangements, and finds in it a great hall very proper for dining, adorned with coats-of-arms painted on the walls—among them the Lily of the Florentine nation. He picks up a lance, like a man who has an old grudge on hand, goes against this painted shield and defaces it from top to bottom. Time comes, and with it Castruccio and his gentlemen eager to dine. The valet awaits his master, runs to meet him in the hall, and cries: 'Look, my lord, look. Have I well served those traitor-arms or not?' Castruccio, like a wise man, says, 'God keep all: give us something to eat;' but put away the deed and the doer in his mind until he should want them. Not many days later the time came when his host and the Florentine faced each other, drawn up in line of battle, and before the enemy stood out a fine young man well armed, upon whose shield

shone the red lily. Castruccio saw him, saw him as a champion, turned and beckoned that trusty fellow who had done so valiantly against the wall. 'Come you here,' says he, 'and repeat yourself. Not so long ago you gave hard knocks to the lily on the wall, and got a fine victory by your own account. Off you go now, armed as you choose, and cut that lily to pieces and win another triumph.' 'Ah, sir, you mock me,' says the varlet in dismay; but Castruccio, 'Not a bit of it. You go and you achieve, or I hang you to this bough.' Needs must that he meet the Florentine knight; and he did what he must. He met him in the open, and death on his side; for at first brunt the Florentine ran him through the body. Castruccio, with a calm face, turns to his chivalry, and says he, 'Mark that bout; be you ready, signori, to fight men, not plaster walls!'" This was the man who cooped the Florentines within their defences, and had a palio run round them of three courses—the first for men on horseback, the second for men on foot, and the third for "donne allegre," followers of the camp.

The great battle.

Altopascio was fought in September 1325. The taking of Pistoja had mortally stung the Florentines; no rest for them until they had their vendetta on Castruccio. There was more than a grudge against him,

indeed. They saw him master of all the country north of them and of every outlet to the west. They had allies in the north from whom they were cut off; they could not get to the sea while he held Pisa and Lucca together. He was choking Florence, and must be ridded. To do this they hired Raymond of Cardona, a good Condottier, knights from France and Burgundy, and allies from all the Guelf cities; massed by one means or other a force of nearly 20,000 men, of whom 5000 were cavalry under one Born, a Burgundian, Raymond of Cardona's marshal; and, starting in July, they attacked Castruccio at two points. One of these was at Tizzano, a fortress in the Val d' Ombrone, which guarded Pistoja; the other was Altopascio, which in those days had a castle garrisoned by 500 men. It was one of a chain of castles—Vivinaia, Montechiaro, Porcari, etc.—which stretches all along the ridge and ends at Altopascio; but Altopascio is the most important precisely because the ridge does end there. You have only to stand on the height to see that if Cardona could get this place he had Lucca at his mercy, and with Lucca the heart of Castruccio's power. Therefore, while Cardona made a feint on Tizzano, Altopascio was his real objective.

I can't go into the minutiæ of the war: let

it be enough that Castruccio concentrated on Tizzano, for some reason or another, and suffered Cardona get Altopascio. Perhaps he foresaw what happened next, and so took his time. Cardona, whether afraid of wanting water, or of the cold wind, or what not, did not stay where he was, but on the 9th of September went down the hill with his whole force and posted himself at the Abbey of Pozzevere in the marsh of Sesto. Even from here he might have done something; pushed up the water-course between Vivinaia and Porcari, and cut his enemies' line. But he sat still. If he thought Castruccio would leave him sitting he very much mistook his man.

Castruccio left him sitting exactly two days. Having sent for help from his friends the Milanese, and got the promise of Azzo Visconti and a thousand men, he took up the position which Cardona had abandoned, the heights of Altopascio, and watched his slumberous enemy. On the 11th of the month Cardona tried to do what he ought to have done before — slip in between Montechiaro and Porcari. There was a way, of sorts, but it would never carry his baggage and the famous Martinella — that great bell on a towered car without which the Florentines never went into battle. Cardona sent out his pioneers to make him a road, and 400 cavalry under

Master Urlenbach, a German, to support the pioneers. Castruccio from his heights sent down skirmishing parties; squadron was added to squadron until, in Villani's words, "there took place the prettiest, best sustained little fight you ever saw in Tuscany," which lasted some few hours, and four times gave rout to either side, retreating and advancing in orderly wise, after the fashion of a tournament. The Florentines might have won this engagement if Cardona had reinforced them at the right time and place; but instead of that he sent the bulk of his host to the head of the plain, where there was a great dyke and little room to deploy. Castruccio saw his chance and swept down the hill in strength, just as the dusk was falling in. Bad preparation for a pitched battle. Cardona retired in disorder to his abbey; Master Urlenbach was taken, the field remained with Castruccio, and with the field the way to Lucca.

After this Cardona sat still for eleven days, giving time to Azzo of Milan to come in with his reinforcements. It was wet and stormy weather, all the country a swamp; floods must have washed Cardona into action. He moved out on Sunday, the 22nd September, in good order, and went to tackle Altopascio once more—which he never should have left, except for Lucca. He had, or

thought he had, a sure retreat in case of the worst, either back to his swamps and thence to Calcinaja and the Arno, or by the Cerbaja Pass down to Ponte a Cappiano by the way you and I have just come. But, as we know, Castruccio had provided for him there. Nothing was done on Sunday; Cardona got the best position he could for the night, and Castruccio did not care to move without Azzo Visconti. He had that hero in Lucca, but could not get him to move out. Cardona, through spies, might have known that.

Before the sun was over the hill, on Monday morning, he attacked it from two sides, advancing in great strength to push Castruccio into the valley. It is by no means a high or steep place, but, rather, a broad rolling down, difficult only on the Cappiano side. It does not appear that there was much advantage of the ground; but some there must have been, because Castruccio only replied by short rushes of his cavalry, by alternate attack and retreat holding his own until nine o'clock in the forenoon. At that hour Azzo Visconti had got out of Lucca, and could be seen creeping among the willows of Capannori. Seeing him there, timing him beautifully, Castruccio advanced all his line and came crashing down the hill; Azzo joined him at the foot and took up the pace; so battle was joined with the Florentines,

as I make out, just below the church, where the road crosses the railway and the bullock-carts wait for the trains to pass. At the first shock Born and his Frenchmen wavered and gave back. If Cardona had moved up to support them all had been well; but he did not, so the flying French were driven into their friends and all stood huddling together. The battle was over in a few hours; but the slaughter endured until nightfall, and ended only with the drowning mercies of Cappiano. Born, says Villani, had been bought. A sure proof is that Galeazzo Visconti afterwards dubbed him a knight. There is no proof that he was not; and certainly, if money could have given Castruccio a victory, money would have been paid. Raymond of Cardona and his son, with some of the greatest in Florence, the camp, baggage, furniture, treasure, Martinella and all, fell to Castruccio. That must have been a fine entry of his, as conqueror, into Lucca, when all the men and women of the place went out to meet him as if he were a king. Before him went the Martinella of Florence on a car; oxen drew it trapped in the Florentine red and white, blazoned with the Florentine lily. Behind the car walked the prisoners—great Florentines all—and Messer Raymond of Cardona with a lighted candle which he was to offer to

San Martino in the cathedral. They sang mass and Te Deum: it was Saint Martin's day. After that Castruccio gave the notables a feast, and then sent them all to prison. Many ransomed themselves. Castruccio got a hundred thousand gold florins from them, says Villani.

This was the heyday of his power; but he did strenuously so long as he lived. The Emperor Otto came to Pisa as his friend and ally, and made him Duke of Lucca. Old Bishop Guy of Arezzo, who had stood by him throughout, fought with him, and been excommunicated with him, quarrelled with him at last over this great condescension of his master's. They were joking and laughing one day, and Castruccio laughed the longer. Bishop Guy complained to the Emperor, and the Emperor shrugged his shoulders. The old warrior took offence and flounced out of Pisa into the Maremma, where he sickened, made his peace with the Church, and died a good death, as they call it. More of him when I get to Arezzo and see his storied tomb, with more swords on it than peaceful crosiers. Castruccio died at forty-seven years old, and is buried in Saint Francis' church in Lucca. I shall take you to his tomb anon.[1] He was a great man, full of

[1] For Villani's account of the manner of his death, see Vol. II. Chapter VIII., Appendix.

terrible cheer, incredibly swift and crafty, just to his subjects, treacherous abroad. "Where he could vanquish by fraud he would never try to do it by force; for he said that it was the victory, and not the manner of getting it, that gained glory for a man." This is very strange doctrine, you may think; and yet I don't know. It may well be a matter of opinion, whether it be the more glorious to risk the cutting of your throat or the cutting of your schemes.

There are weary miles from Altopascio to Lucca, which remains recluse to the very last, deeply hidden in green leaves.

BELLOSGUARDO, FLORENCE.

CHAPTER XIV

THE GRACES OF LUCCA

THESE graces of Lucca are very much by the way,[1] not explicit at all: the flushed side of San Michele, the silver dust which makes all San Frediano pure—happy accidents these. By chance the red Guinigi tower grew three ilexes upon its top, and there you may see them now, glossy as bronze against the blue, like dark flowers upon a rosy stem. Accident, of course, that a pigeon should choose there to be rid of an acorn—yet what other Tuscan city has bred birds so heavenly disposed? This, among Lucca's graces, grew out of the soil; so also did this other, that the Lucchesi built most happily in brick, having red earth over all the valley. Now, as half the pride of architecture is to stamp the grandiose with humanity, to make mountains, let me say, which yet shall savour of home, your

Accidental graces.

[1] This may be a reason why nobody ever goes there. Lucca is one of the least visited towns in Tuscany.

builder of bricks has sure advantage over him who works in marble. Here, substantially, all

MONTELUPO.

the great houses and most of the churches are of this comfortable makeshift; some few are

sheeted with marble, and one nearly spoiled in the doing—I mean San Michele; the best are left alone. San Frediano, the best of them all, is brown, San Francesco and San Romano, the two preaching churches, are red. Happy was Lucca in that the Carrarese, hoeing, as Dante says, his rocky glebe, lay out of her jurisdiction. The greatest of her sons, Castruccio Castracane, did his worst to make a kingdom of Lucca which should enfold all Tuscany; but again, in his death the city was blessed. Lastly, the trees with which she is girt and otherwise adorned must be set down to the grace of God, who chose for her the plane, as for Padua the breezy aspen, for Florence the cypress, and for Rome the pine. Disposer supreme! No more dainty mantling could have been found for a place which, from whatever side you come, appears dipped in a thicket of nightingales. In spring these trees make a gauzy veil of grey and brown; in the autumn you go under pleached alleys of silver and green. Fair and gentle, too, are the memories of Lucca. In spite of Alessio Interminelli and his seraglio (as to which see, if you choose, 18 Inferno, 122), Dante calls it the town of Santa Zita. She was a little servant girl, both pretty and good, whom her master did most ardently invite to stray. But she

Santa Zita.

Piazza del Duomo, Lucca

shook her head at him, and chose a better service. She speaks to me much more than the Volto Santo, of Lucca, which I should figure, if I were a painter, as a modest young woman, gently insisting upon virtue, but with nothing acrid in her refusals. Or why should I not choose that quiet lady of whom the Florentine has the heart to speak in his superb, easy way? Why not Gentucca?

> Woman is born, not wimpled yet
> To make my city sweet to thee,
> However men may chasten it,

says Bonagiunta, the old minstrel, prophesying. Dante was in Lucca in 1314, being a year short of his fiftieth; Gentucca may have been anything between seventeen and one-and-twenty. I know—the learned know—no more about her: the girl was an episode, as women must be content to be for poets. Fortunate for her that her name gave a rhyme for *Lucca!* She has made great sport for the scholiasts. Was she married? Was she a baggage? Did she, on the other hand, illume a Platonic candle? What does it matter? She was fair, her name was Gentucca, and so were her deeds. She made Lucca sweet for Dante; he tossed her lightly in a terzet. What more can woman do for poet, or poet for woman? I hope she is in Santa Zita's bosom by now.

In these coy and silent streets, under the temperate spell of these reticent house-fronts and serene, grey churches, your feeling chimes in tune with the history of the place and with what you can find out concerning the dead Lucchesi. They were a diligent and docile race, not slothful in business by any means, but not fervent in spirit either, nor magnanimous. Castruccio the Great arose, an erring comet, and blazed, and vanished. He left a burning trail, in which Lucca made haste to hide herself. She produced no more Interminelli of the sort: one is tempted to believe Machiavelli's pretty story about him, that Monna Such-an-One, unwedded daughter of an Interminelli, found him by chance under a gooseberry bush. Then there was Burlamacchi. Burlamacchi was to Cosimo Primo what a *zabajone* would be to a hearty eater; or it was as if a staid housewife should suddenly determine to play the romp. Burlamacchi said too much and did too little, scandalised his neighbours and estranged the lovers of his virtuous hours. Of such were the disastrous divagations of Lucca from the golden mean. To clench the argument, you shall try her in the arts. Matteo Civitale is the glory of the Lucchesi, their only artist of consequence, and their condemnation. Compare him no more

Her children.

highly than with Mino of Fiesole, you will find him an industrious, dull dog. He knows the rules, but not how to break them; he rubs away at his marbles, smoothing out the very character of the fine stone. He sets his *putti* holding shields, or clinging about the horns of an altar; he tries to give them a cock of the head in

THE LUCCA ROAD.

Desiderio's manner, urges them to straddle their legs like Mino's pert *bimbi*, throws up Sebastian's chin that he may seem to languish under arrows. All to no purpose; he might as well have done wax-works. Ten paces from his altar in the church is Della Quercia's Ilaria—all woman in a dead girl. The diligent, sober, docile Lucchesi! Now see wherein they excelled—just exactly

where Giotto did *not*, according to Sacchetti's salted story. Call to your mind John Arnolfini and his wife, as Van Eyck saw and pictured them once in Bruges, amid much domestic dignity and promise. This composed, smooth-faced, sedate, wise man was of Lucca, and shall be my chosen emblem of his nation's virtues. Set beside him whom you will from Florence. Van der Goes did a Portinari for Santa Maria Nuova. If you go to the Uffizii to see it, you will find in the same gallery the founder of the Medici house, common parent of its two lines, Giovanni Bicci by name—a hard-bitten old chafferer, restless, every nerve throbbing, mean, and edgy as a knife. Either of these men has the true Florentine grain; both are flinty and sharp-cornered; neither has dignity of parade. Neither aspired to that or had leisure for it. They had their money, or would have it; let the world wag, they could shrug. They never shrugged in Lucca over lack of manners. So John Arnolfini is like his town, which, seated prosperously, hidden in a bower of green wealth, has a peculiar grace, and sets great store by it. The beauty of the ordered, middle-class life is Lucca's; Monday thrift and Sunday peace. It is full of such amenity, has smallness, extreme elegance, a dove-coloured, Quaker habit. It is like a

thoughtful, pretty woman, to be wooed devoutly, not stormed. "The inhabitants of Lucca are exceedingly civil to strangers above all places in Italy, and speak the purest Italian. Besides, the ladies here are very conversable, and the religious women not at all reserved." That is John Evelyn: Lucca was kind to him.

Great churches.

"If my readers," quoted Sir Walter from a *British Essayist*, "if my readers at any time remark that I am particularly dull, they may be assured there is a design under it." And if I, in turn, fetch after the manner of Herr Baedeker or the late Mr. Hare, let it be owned afterwards that I have propped my thesis. The four great churches of Lucca, then, which are, to wit, the Cathedral of Saint Martin, Saint Mary's Without, Saint Michael's and Saint Fredian's, are of the same order, the Lombard-Romanesque, copied, I suppose, by Pisa. In my poor judgment that arrogant city did not improve upon the model, though Herr Baedeker is of a different opinion. Like all other fine things here these churches are very solid, and very rational where they have been left as their contrivers designed; but like them also they are hard to be seen, and you have to count them as a condiment in the dish, one of the many subtle flavours which cause this town

to have a clean, tonic taste upon the palate. How noble an appearance they would make, if they made one at all, you shall presently judge when you walk upon the ramparts and see a little of San Frediano.

Saint Martin's.

The Cathedral is Saint Martin's, as the porch proclaims; all his chivalrous history flanks the west door. But the façade is embroidered with sculpture; arcades first superimposed with great effect, the whole is worked over and over until, with nothing remarkable and everything wrought, the complacent eye takes in the mass. It is a dædal effect, as they say, an effect of quilted brocade. Niccolò Pisano has crowded a *Deposition* into a lunette with, perhaps, more ingenuity than good fortune; the apostles are aligned on either side the mystery—hoary, venerable patriarchs of Roman aspect; over their heads lozenges and medallions hold the signs of the Zodiac, the three Great Virtues and the four Lesser. The columns are garlanded, the capitals are feathery; there is a maze hard by the door, which is a game to youth and to eld a fetish, to be solved with the finger and devoutly kissed. Let me not forget the sequence of the months, done in Giotto's manner, with candid love of good husbandry. Man warms himself,

ploughs, sows, reaps; he gathers his olives and grapes, treads out the wine, crushes down the

CATHEDRAL, LUCCA.

oil, provides against the winter. The *bourgeois*, you perceive, striving after the *bourgeois* reward. And getting it: in December, rest after toil,

he very properly kills a pig. All this and more, whatsoever the men of Lucca may do or fear or hope for, you will find incised about the porch of Saint Martin's. Inside, with much of Civitale, including his gaudy and foolish *Tempietta* (shrine of the Sacred Face), there is some harvesting for a quiet eye: peace, and a level light, great breadth and dignity where transepts meet, and, in one of these, Ilaria del Caretto, "couching supine her beauties lily white." Over this immortal piece it is hard to be temperate. Critics have cavilled at such and such parts of it: one went so far as to say in my hearing that not so could the breast lie on a dead woman. Are we copying dead women then? Is the eye of genius to play pander to the sun, and serve Della Quercia no better than a photographer his box of glasses? Another hardy discoverer of museum-specimens said that Pheidias would have done better. Would he though? Pheidias could have done no more than put woman into a woman. He might have done as much, but he would have let Ilaria go by. Even he might have given you death, if he could have brought himself to contemplate it.[1] But Della Quercia trod the

Ilaria.

[1] If he had, no doubt he would have followed the practice of all his neighbours and rendered the dead alive.

verges of life and death, of character and kind. He put all Ilaria in, and the article of death, They have but newly folded her hands, and drawn her eyelids down. This arrowy lady while she lived was mistress of the rosy tower which is crowned by trees, third wife, to that end, of a very potent and futile lord, as we shall shortly see.

The sacristan, who takes his charge seriously, will tell you the merits of a great silver cross, the *Croce de' Pisani*, which Lucca took from Pisa in Castruccio's day, and never returned. He will show you, too, the best thing that Civitale ever did, and the smallest. a portrait in relief of the head of Pietro di Noceto, a sharp-faced humanist. But of all he had to say or do I prefer his story of the travelled Englishmen—not Mr. Ruskin—who made a drawing of Ilaria upon her bier, and promised a copy to the sacristan. The Englishman went away, the copy never came. "Then," said the sacristan, "I knew that some serious thing had occurred; for this signore was an Englishman." God bless the man! I wish I had his faith in Englishmen. But the fact is, he was right. He inquired, he told me, of every traveller who came through Lucca, describing minutely (as all Tuscans can) the person and habits of the illustrious. His name he had never

The sacristan.

known. By these means he did discover that his Englishman had started in a ship for Leghorn, had died on the voyage out, and been buried at sea. If the drawing of Ilaria was not in his portmanteau the mischief was in it. There was no scruple of doubt in the sacristan's loyal mind. He has in his custody, though he thinks little of it, a picture of much unobtrusive merit—one of those innocent casual things of which old Ghirlandajo had the secret, and made his profit like the good artisan that he was; a piece all gold and crimson and blue, flowers and chaffinches and children's faces; a holy conversation, as they call it, where Mary, as a fair child, holds a fairer on her lap. Venerable bishops, clear-eyed boys and girls, form her court, gravely assisting her to do nothing at all; a couple of babies hold back the curtains of silk damask. Trivial, lovely thing, it is a sacred nursery-rhyme, a page out of a fairy-tale, and quite as true to him who is young enough to read it. "There's nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so." *Speriamo dunque!*

I must not omit to admire the piazza in which this fine church stands as one of three. Opposite, in a garden, behind a garden-wall (always suggestive in a city), is San Giovanni, the baptistry, with a front of green and white marble

Duomo Lucca.

and a warm-coloured cupola. The Archbishop's house, of faded geranium bricks, is here; other tall buildings, a fountain and basin in an uneven breadth of flag-stones; and (crown of all) the stern grey belfry, made aerial by arcades of pure marble. Like all else in Lucca this has no

S. FREDIANO, LUCCA.

positive beauty, but charms by choiceness; it has neither the bravado of Pisa, nor the piercing loveliness of Siena to disturb your heart. It is reticent, silvery, has a bloom, is elusive, shuns to be admired.

Go, then, to San Frediano, which looks best from the walls. You shall, therefore, walk upon

the ramparts, made cushiony in May with dropt blossoms, until you have passed the singing girls at the silk mill, and the gate of Saint Donatus the Bishop. Anon you will behold an august basilica, pearl-grey relieved with white marble, having a shallow apse treated in the classical mode with Corinthian columns and entablature. Beside it, in splendid partnership, a tall rectangular tower, really oblong, makes up a figure of honourable age and service. Than this church there is nothing more weighty in Lucca. It has a nave and four aisles, no transepts—a majestic simplicity which is far from the Gothic standard, but rather puts the Christian at ease with the world as he finds it. "Behold, I am with you always." This is what San Frediano has declared to the Lucchesi from the seventh century onwards, if one may credit the books.

San Frediano.

There are some agreeable frescoes within, after Francia's manner—one by the door, one whole chapel full of them—rich and cool in colour, neither serious nor too seriously intended, but pleasant and smooth, inspiring that gentler sort of piety which is half benevolence and half good manners. You may not go to extremes in a basilica. But you may be as opaque as you please. For some such reason Della Quercia

was the artist, and San Frediano lucky to get him. The Trenta tombs—Frederigo's and his wife's—are his; low reliefs designed for the pavement originally, now reared up foolishly into the wall. It was by no means necessary for the Quattrocento sculptors to have beautiful persons to deal with, nor were they ever tempted to shirk what they found. This Trenta couple are old and seamy with care, but noble as may be in spite of it; for in graving theirs Della Quercia had another portrait on hand, that of their master and occupant. So here you have him inhabiting the old shells of the Trenta pair, Death, a careful tenant; and into their worn lineaments that wise despot has breathed for a long term of years his repose, his dignity, and all his solemn accomplishments. Monna Berta, Liperata, whatever her name may have been—Trenta's wife—bears to have been handsome once: you can hardly tell now. I should say that she had borne many children to her dew-lapped lord. But, as usual, Death's portrait is the best of the three. Opposite to them, in high relief under Gothic canopies, are a Madonna and Saints by the same artist, grand, blind, rooted heathen divinities, emanations of a rugged but kindly soil. With these fine things in your head you will leave San Frediano's well content, and the better yet if you avoid a sorry

chapel on the south side of the door, with the worst Della Robbia in it contained between the devil and the light of day.

There remain some score of churches, of which I shall only notice two. San Romano shall be one, a plain parallelogram of brick with an outside pulpit, attentive to which I can see Master John Arnolfini standing in a company of his gossips, his hatchet-face under a flat cap, his thin hands decently wrapped in his sleeves. This is the Dominican church, ruinous outside, inside hideous beyond description, degraded by thick stucco, shabby cherubim, plaster-wreaths, and other simulacra of the Seicento, which, believing nothing, whitewashed everything. But behind the altar lies San Romano himself, and over his dust his effigy in alabaster—credible and without whitewash. It shows him a pathetic, pretty youth in the habit of a legionary, with curls, and folded hands, and a placid, waxen face. Civitale made it; the lad himself suffered under Decius. Last, San Francesco comes, long, square, empty, and red. Gothic this, as the Tuscans understood that love-affair, and as gaunt as Santa Croce. It has a slim tower, like the Garisenda at Bologna, and, for congregation, sacks of flour and ships' biscuits. There lay, or lies yet, Castruccio

San Romano.

Castracane, the great commander; nor do I know that one could wish him fitter monument than the provand of soldiers.

The glories of Lucca under that magnanimous warrior were, maybe, none of her seeking; but Castruccio being dead, it was Lucca had to pay:

THE RAMPARTS, LUCCA.

Dominion over Pisa and Pistoja, constant menace to Florence, territory in the mountains and tribute from the south—all these great things were blown away with a breath so soon as he was dead. The breath was Cæsar's, hot against a Guelfic city. Lewis the Bavarian made nothing of Castruccio's son; of

After Castruccio.

whom, indeed, there was nothing to be made. He put an Imperial Vicar into the town, took away all dominion outside the bare limits of the *contado*, and set a heavy poll-tax on the citizens. This they could not or would not pay; so then the Emperor put Lucca into the market, to go to the highest bidder. In 1329 it was bought and sold—a year after Castruccio's death, who had had all Tuscany on his knees. The whirligig of time was never slow to move in that bickering land.

Guinigi.

For forty years long the servitude and shame lasted, with new and ever new masters, but the same misery. The Genoese, who had first bought, sold their bargain to John of Bohemia, the blind king; he again to Mastino of Verona, Can Grande's son. Florence had her next, and Pisa afterwards. Charles IV., the restless, wand-whittling little Kaiser, set her free; and she put up an altar in Saint Martin's, "To God the Liberator and the tutelary Saints," which is there still. Then came the turn of tyrants from her own lap. Paolo Guinigi was one of them, owner of Ilaria del Caretto and other wives, to say nothing of two rose-coloured palaces and the tree-crowned tower. He sat on an uneasy throne for thirty years, temporising and bribing mostly, trying for the *juste milieu* between his great

compeers. So, in Florence, Lorenzo de' Medici tried later, and did it. But Guinigi! If he could set off Milan against Florence, now, and sit serene upon the balancing-point! At first it did seem possible. Visconti of Milan professed to be his firm friend; old Cosimo de' Medici came ambassador from Florence with letters addressed to the Magnificence of Paolo Guinigi —*Osservantissimo Signore suo*, and so on—in his despatch-box. It all seemed splendid and easy; one can see in the mind's eye the keen young Ilaria walking the long corridors of the two neighbour palaces, and all the fine company paying her court; one can imagine the Magnifico himself, an indulgent lord when things went well, pinching her ear. The stone benches are still left where the servants sat waiting for their masters, and the rings to which they tied up the big trampling horses. All else is a wreck. The windows have been bricked up, the moth and the worm have the panels, and mice the wainscots. As for Ilaria, they carried her to Saint Martin's in her prime; but the fate of the Magnificent Guinigi was that of his house; for the worms had him at their leisure in a Milanese prison—the fruit of as pretty a bit of complicated bribery as can be found in all Italian history.

Exactly and shortly, what happened was this.

Visconti—that fat-jowled scoundrel with the goatee whom you may see effigied in his Certosa at Pavia—alarmed the Florentines by his activities in Romagna, so they sent messengers for help from the Magnificence of Guinigi. Well and good—but just so also did Visconti. A situation singularly delicate for Guinigi upon his balancing-point, but not unknown to history before his day. It had always been a maxim of Tuscan diplomacy to act against Florence at a pinch; and Guinigi so acted. Seven hundred Lucchesi went up into Lombardy under the conduct of his son. The Florentines were not likely to forget that, nor did they. For when the war, if such chequer-board work can be called a war, had dragged on to a peace which was but a move in the game—peace of Ferrara, 1428, to be exact—Florence and Milan made terms; but terms from which Guinigi and his Lucca were left out. Next year sixteen thousand Florentines, under Neri Capponi, laid siege to Lucca. The affair was serious enough to bring a fine architect into the field—Brunelleschi, no less—and a great general. Francesco Sforza came down from Lombardy, ostensibly from his master at Milan, ostensibly to help the Lucchesi, actually, as events proved, to sell himself and his sword to extraordinary advantage.

A good story of rascals.

Brunelleschi, who could certainly design a dome, made a muddle of his sapping. His plan was to turn the Serchio, that river which, some thousand years before, San Frediano himself had turned by miracle. Make a dam in the river, said Brunelleschi, head up the water; then, when everything is ready, turn it on to the walls, and you will see. Capponi doubted, but was overruled; the works were begun, continued, and ended. A huge dam was made between San Piero a Vico and the city wall, at the same time a dyke to keep the camp safe at Capannori. To this the Lucchesi countered with a dyke on their side the dam, and then, one fine night, issued in good force of picks and mattocks, and made a breach in the Florentine dyke. The dam overflowed, the Florentines were washed out of camp, left everything behind them—baggage, standards, siege-train, everything—and once more made rueful acquaintance with the downs of Altopascio. It was just at this moment of crisis that Francesco Sforza's spears were to be seen on the hill-road from Pescia; and the question then turned, as he had intended it should turn, on which side he was coming to act.

Of Sforza it is no injustice to say that he favoured the side with more money to spend. He was there to be hired, but if he had a pre-

ference in the matter it was against Guinigi. For once upon a time, as it had happened, seeking a hireling cut-throat, the Magnificent had passed over Sforza for that inspired cripple Piccinnino; and had done wisely, so far as could then be judged. Piccinnino, as well as being an untirable soldier, a perfect demon of bloodshed for all his dragging leg and writhen body, was mainly a little gentleman.[1] Events, however, were proved to have required a longer sight than Guinigi's. Piccinnino just now was at work in Calabria; Sforza was here with this old grudge against Guinigi, and Guinigi had to pay.

The bitter thing (for in this see-sawing tyrant I can find no tragic thing) is that by boldness he might even now have saved himself. He had bribed Sforza, outbidding the Florentines; Sforza had attacked his enemies and raised the siege of Lucca. Then came the moment when a victorious ally might fairly reckon on a welcome from the city he had succoured. Sforza looked for an ovation, triumphant entry, ladies to make flowery the gates, clergy and choir to sing him towards the eye of Heaven, a feast, a laurel, and his ducats. He should have had them; he

[1] It is true, if we may trust his apologist, that he hanged his wife with his own hands in the presence of the host; but there were reasons. In spite of that, he was rarely chivalrous for an Italian.

should have been fed into magnanimity. Instead,

THE GUINIGI TOWER, LUCCA.

he was met outside the walls by the Magnificence

of Paolo, who would pay the covenanted price, but by no means let the hero within the walls. In a general way there is much to be said for his refusal; easy as it was to get a condottier into your city, it was a ticklish business to get him out again. However—Sforza pocketed his money, and probably shrugged. What is most certain is that he made directly off and sold himself to the Florentines whom he had just drubbed. But the Florentines had the same doubts as Guinigi. They gave the man 50,000 ducats upon these terms, that he should leave Tuscan soil and march back into Lombardy. Paid handsomely by either side, what had Sforza to do but obey? He made leisurely preparations for the march homewards, leisurely enough for this very curious sequel.

The Lucchesi believed that Guinigi, in refusing entry to Sforza, was paving his own way to treachery. They thought that he intended to sell them to Florence. Ridiculous; but this is the account. Certain of the ancients went over to Sforza with this fearful suspicion, and Sforza, with the money of both sides in his pocket, now saw his way to that of a third. He delayed his preparations and waited. On the night of the 14th August 1430, the Lucchesi rose, *a rumore*, surprised their Magnificent in his bed, dragged

him out of his rose-coloured palace into streets alive with men and torches, ringing with cries of *Popolo!* and *Libertà!* and handed him over to Sforza, who had already received his third fee. He was to get one more—the fourth—bounty. The hardy mercenary entered Lucca next day in triumph, received as saviour of the State. He witnessed the sack of the Guinigi houses, the pair of them, and no doubt got his share of the spoils. Finally, to induce him out of the town, the ancients paid him 12,000 more ducats. And then he went back to Lombardy, and Guinigi went with him. That poor wretch was imprisoned at Pavia by his friend Visconti, and died there in two years' time, "heart-broken" say the books. So much for the *juste milieu* in high Tuscan politics.

Latter-day Lucca.

It is surely not a little curious that this low-lying, fertile, snug, and thrifty Lucca should have been the one State of all Tuscany to escape the clutches of Florence. But so it is. One by one the cities went down—mettlesome Pistoja, proud Pisa, sharp-tongued Arezzo, Volterra upon her impregnable rock, Cortona, Borgo, Città di Castello; the fall of Siena herself—last act of the Tuscan tragedy—the formation of the Grand Duchy, did not drag Lucca into the vortex these great convulsions

made. From the day in which she got rid of Guinigi, an aristocratic commonwealth patronised by the Empire, she remained free until just a hundred years ago. So she was seen in her kindly old age by the vivacious Monsieur de Brosses, when he travelled about Italy in 1739-40, applying to all and sundry his test of *sal gallicum.* He was very facetious at the expense of this little republic, which consisted in his day of the city and eleven villages,[1] a Council of sixty notables, three secretaries of State, a gonfalonier, four ushers, and a *garde-suisse*, which could only line one side of the way when the Senate went down to deliberate, because there was not enough of it for both. He saw that the country-side was worked like a market garden, and approved of the law against the wearing of swords. Still, then, you may detect the *bourgeois* in the notable. "Observe, also," says he, "that the Jesuits have never been able to squeeze themselves into Lucca, whatsoever shifts they may have used." Through all his raillery it is easy to read that the graces of Lucca remained the quiet, the orderly, and the real. But history was still a-making; there was a greater condottier than Castruccio to

[1] His liveliest sally is this: It rained continuously throughout his stay; whereupon he remarks in a letter to his friend Charles upon the extraordinary thing it is that such a little republic should have such quantities of rain. A mainly pleasant, very frivolous man.

come. There was Buonaparte; there were Elisa, the Bourbons, the Austrians, Cavour and Garibaldi in store for Tuscany. Lucca became a principate. Offspring of Elisa may have been that Prince of Lucca who paid a visit to our Court in 1840 or so, and was unkindly—I know not if by merit—called Filthy Lucre. He, at any rate, and his likes, came about the city, added a little husbandry here and there—a bridge, an aqueduct, a bank to the Serchio, some roads—and departed to their destinies, having left small mark upon an industrious, mild-mannered, and frugal race. The Lucchesi have thriven from the time of John Arnolfini and his gravid, obedient wife, and I am sure they thrive still. They were always noted for singing; and now, as you walk the leafy ramparts, you can hear the mill-girls tuning their merry throats as they card the silk and the humming shuttles fly. Contented with a few things, you will leave the little town, I hope, with a memory or two, when you have seen it fairly; as, *item*, a shady walk, a convocation of dignified shrines, a few old towers of silver and brown, the image of one great man (sleeping calmly under meal-sacks) and the fragrance of one beautiful lady. Few cities in Tuscany will give you as good.

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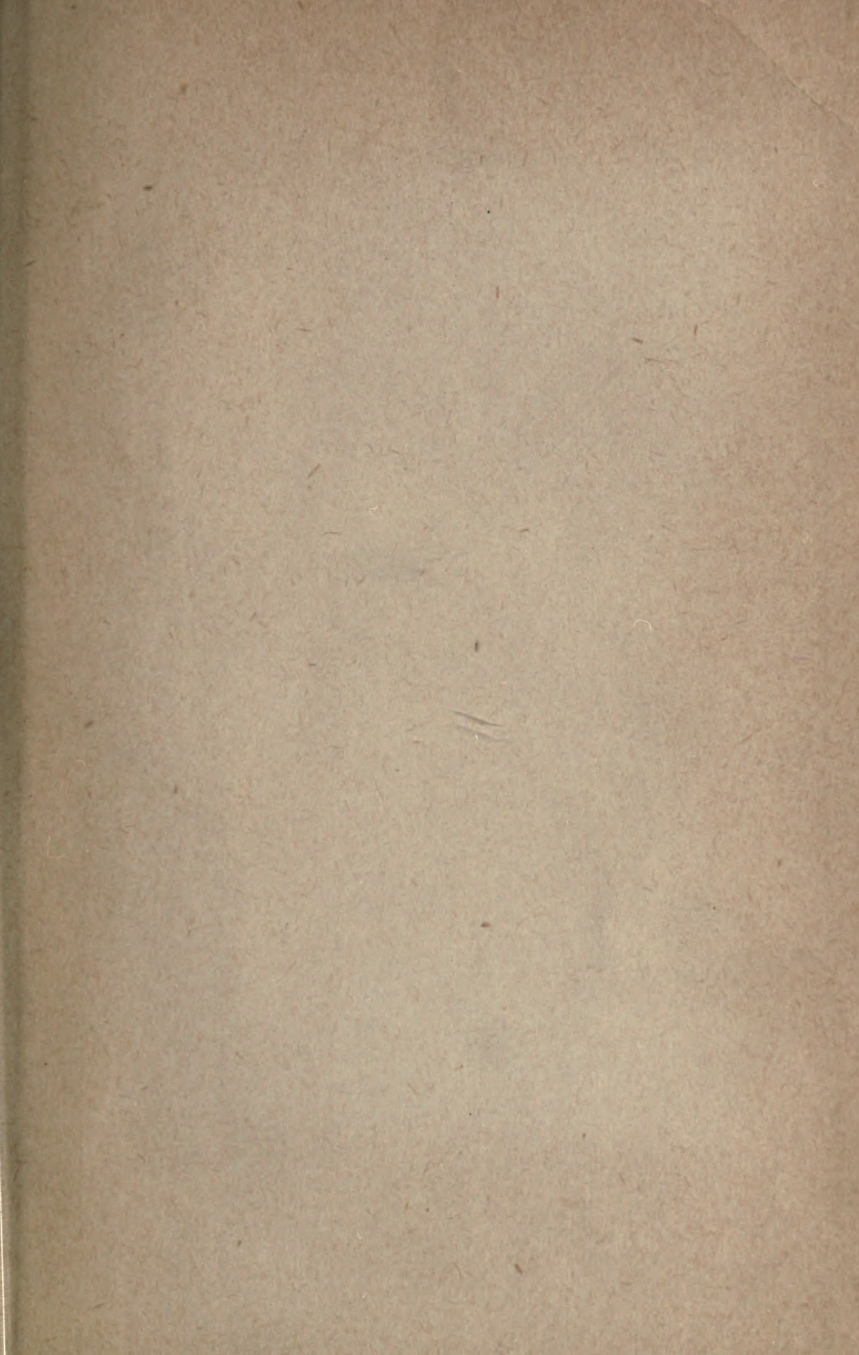

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